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GANDHI SERIES

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I like Anand Hingorani's idea of collecting my writings under suitable heads. The reader will not fail to appreciate the labour he has given to securing attractive printing & binding.

M.K. Gandhi

To the PROTAGONISTS OF PAKISTAN

Edited & Published BY

[illegible] T. Hingora[illegible]

"The Muslim Leaguers have to-day raised the slogan that ten crores of Indian Muslims are in danger of being submerged and swept out of existence, unless they constitute themselves into a separate State. I call that slogan scare-mongering, pure and simple.

"It is nonsense to say that any people can permanently crush or swamp out of existence one-fourth of its population, which the Mussalmans are in India.

"But I would have no hesitation in conceding the demand of Pakistan, if I could be convinced of its righteousness or that it is good for Islam. But I am firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forth by the Muslim League is un-Islamic, and I have not hesitated to call it sinful.

"Islam stands for the unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family. Therefore, those who want to divide India into possibly warring groups are enemies alike of India and Islam. They may cut me to pieces, but they cannot make me subscribe to something which I consider to be wrong."

—Mahatma Gandhi

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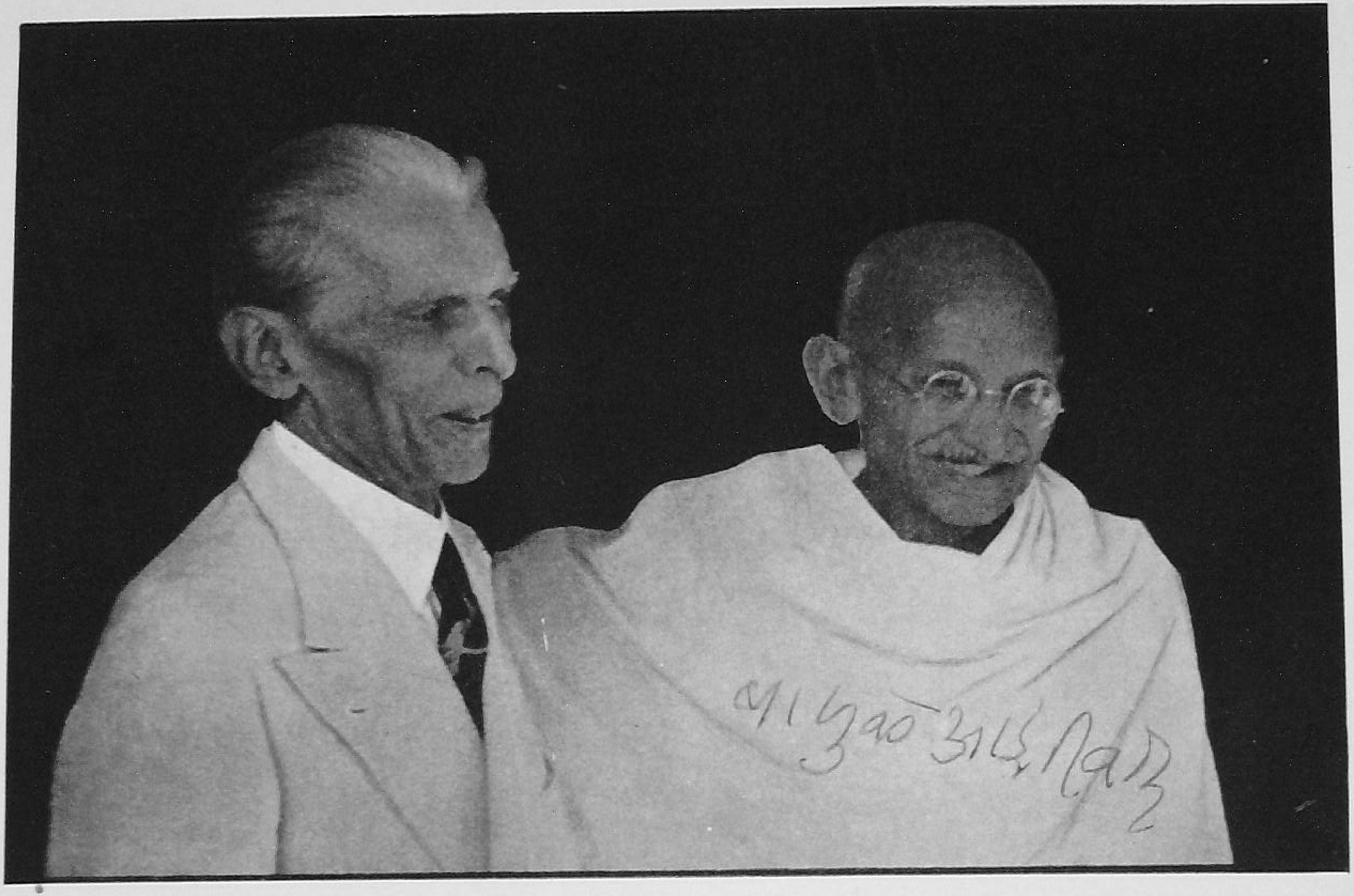

Gandhiji with Jinnah Sahib

Courtesy : D. R. D. Wadia

TO THE PROTAGONISTS OF PAKISTAN

By G.L. 84

MAHATMA GANDHI

~~GL 100~~

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EDITED & PUBLISHED

By

ANAND T. HINGORANI

KARACHI

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M K Gandhi

PREFACE

This volume is at once an appeal, a message and a warning. It is an appeal to the better mind of the Muslim League to see and realize the risks inherent in its partition proposal and abandon it in the general interest of all the people inhabiting this great country. It is a message of peace and goodwill to all from a man who is recognized on all hands to be above personal prejudices and passions. And, finally, it is a warning, too,—warning of the difficult times ahead if both the appeal and the message go unheeded.

It is not in answer to the Muslim League's recent cry of Pakistan that we find Gandhiji insisting upon regarding India as one nation. For him India has always been one nation. For, even in 1908, replying to a hypothetical question in *Hind Swaraj* (The Indian Home Rule) whether the introduction of foreigners—Muslims, Parsis, Christians etc.,—had not unmade India as a nation, Gandhiji wrote:

> "India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country.
>
> "In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India."

To yet another question as to what he thought of the 'inborn enmity' between the Hindus and the

Muslims, as proved by their very proverbs, Gandhiji's reply was:

> "That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy. When the Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight. How, then, can there be any inborn enmity? Pray, remember this too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Muslim sovereigns, and Muslims under the Hindu. Each party recognized that mutual fighting was suicidal and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent, quarrels recommenced.
>
> "The proverbs you have quoted were coined when both were fighting; to quote them now is obviously harmful. Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mahomedans own the same ancestors and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mahomedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause of quarrelling?"

The views and sentiments expressed in these lines some forty years ago hold good even to-day; for, the fundamental principle underlying them is so intrinsically sound that it hardly admits of any change whatever. And so in the pages of this volume, too, the reader will find Gandhiji consistently and courageously adhering to this basic principle, notwithstanding the storm and stress of the present unhappy times.

Some friends there might be who would perhaps wish him to resort to some expedient or the other for solving the communal tangle. But such friends should know that nothing could possibly induce Gandhiji to yield to the dictates of expediency or exigencies of time if it meant giving up truth. Truth is everything to him. He would not purchase even *Swaraj* at the cost of truth, for *Swaraj* so purchased would be "illusory."

It is because he profoundly believes India to be one nation that he is unable to subscribe to the 'two-nations' theory of the Muslim League. For him to do so

would be to deny his faith of a life-time. The very demand for Pakistan he has characterized as a sin, inasmuch as it seeks to break our national unity and culture, and introduces an element of perpetual strife. The recent tragic happenings in Calcutta, East Bengal, Bihar and several other parts of the country have amply proved, if indeed a proof were needed, what an unmitigated sin it is.

But whether sin or otherwise, Gandhiji would wish everyone of his countrymen to be alive to the reality of the existing situation and face it up in the only way it should be faced if India is to be spared the misery, the degradation and the agony of a civil war. And the 'only way' that he suggests is the way that a Buddha or a Christ would perhaps have suggested under similar circumstances—the way of peace, goodwill and love.

In the midst of the raging conflagration, at a great risk to his very life, Gandhiji has taken upon himself the arduous task of showing us the way that he treads all by himself to-day with God as his only Help. Alone in the far-off riot-ravaged villages of East Bengal, where but a few days ago man vied with the beast in becoming more beastly, Gandhiji goes about his mission of peace in the confident hope that his non-violence will eventually triumph over the surrounding atmosphere of 'exaggeration and falsity' and help in restoring self-respect and human dignity to those who seem to have lost them to-day. And he does not propose to leave East Bengal till he feels satisfied that "mutual trust has been established between the two communities, and the two have resumed the even tenor of their life in their villages." For, as he says, "without this there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan,—only slavery awaits India, torn asunder by mutual strife and engrossed in barbarity." Let us, therefore, hope and pray that Gandhiji's present attempt succeeds in quenching the fire of communalism and converting this 'land of sorrow' into one without sorrow and suffering !

A word about the arrangement of articles. The reader will please do well to regard this volume as but an extension of Vol. III of the *Series*, namely, *To The Hindus*

and Muslims. Some articles have been taken from that volume and included in the present one in order to give, as far as possible, a complete and coherent picture of the Pakistan problem as viewed by Gandhiji from time to time. At the end, apart from the index, copious appendices have also been given which, I am sure, will increase the value and utility of the volume.

January 26, 1947
INDEPENDENCE DAY

ANAND T. HINGORANI
7, *Edmonstone Road, Allahabad*

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THE ONLY WAY

"I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has compelled me to study, among other things, the implications of a Constituent Assembly. When he first introduced it in the Congress resolutions, I reconciled myself to it because of my belief in his superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. But I was not free from scepticism. Hard facts have, however, made me a convert and, for that reason perhaps, more enthusiastic than Jawaharlal himself. For, I seem to see in it a remedy, which Jawaharlal may not, for our communal and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass, political and other education.

The more criticism I see of the scheme, the more enamoured I become of it. It will be the surest index to the popular feeling. It will bring out the best and the worst in us. Illiteracy does not worry me. I would plump for unadulterated adult franchise for both men and women, *i.e.*, I would put them all on the register of voters. It is open to them not to exercise it if they do not wish to. I would give separate vote to the Muslims; but, without giving separate vote, I would, though reluctantly, give reservation, if required, to every real minority according to its numerical strength.

Thus, the Constituent Assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. To-day, we are unable to say with mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative organization on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-political organizations to question, as they do question, its overwhelmingly representative character. The Muslim League

is undoubtedly the largest organization representing Muslims, but several Muslim bodies—by no means all insignificant—deny its claim to represent them. But the Constituent Assembly will represent all communities in their exact proportion. Except it, there is no other way of doing full justice to rival claims. Without it, there can be no finality to communal and other claims.

Again, the Constituent Assembly alone can produce a constitution indigenous to the country and truly and fully representing the will of the people. Undoubtedly such a constitution will not be ideal, but it will be real, however imperfect it may be in the estimation of the theorists or legal luminaries. Self-government to be self-government has merely to reflect the will of the people who are to govern themselves. If they are not prepared for it, they will make a hash of it. I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion. A diseased person has a prospect of getting well by personal effort. He cannot borrow health from others.

The risks of the experiment are admitted. There is likely to be impersonation. Unscrupulous persons will mislead the illiterate masses into voting for wrong men and women. These risks have to be run, if we are to evolve something true and big. The Constituent Assembly, if it comes into being—as I hope it will—as a result of an honourable settlement between us and the British people, the combined wit of the best men of the two nations will produce an Assembly that will reflect fairly truly the best mind of India. Therefore, the success of the experiment at the present stage of India's history depends upon the intention of the British statesmen to part with power, without engaging India in a deadly unorganized rebellion. For, I know that India has become impatient. I am painfully conscious of the fact that India is not yet ready for non-violent civil disobe-

dience on a mass scale. If, therefore, I cannot persuade the Congress to await the time when non-violent action is possible, I have no desire to live to see a dog-fight between the two communities. I know for certain that, if I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction to the satisfaction of the Congress and there is no communal adjustment, nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting for the time being in anarchy and red ruin. I hold that it is the duty of all communities and Englishmen to prevent such a catastrophe.

The only way out is a Constituent Assembly. I have given my own opinion on it, but I am not tied down to the details. When I was nearly through with this article, I got the following wire from Syed Abdulla Brelvi:

> "Considerable misapprehensions among minorities (about) Constituent Assembly. Strongly urge clarification details, franchise, composition, methods arriving decision."

I think I have said sufficient in the foregoing to answer Syed Saheb's question. By minorities, he has Muslims principally in mind as represented by the Muslim League. If once the proposition, that all communities desire a charter of independence framed by a Constituent Assembly, and that they will not be satisfied with anything else, is accepted, the settling of details surely becomes easy. Any other method must lead to an imposed constitution mostly undemocratic. It would mean an indefinite prolongation of Imperialistic rule, sustained by the help of those who will not accept the fully democratic method of a Constituent Assembly.

The principal hindrance is undoubtedly the British Government. If they can summon a Round Table Conference, as they propose to do after the War, they can surely summon Constituent Assembly, subject to safeguards, to the satisfaction of minorities. The expression 'satisfaction of minorities' may be regarded as vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement. The question thus resolves itself into whether the British Government desire to part with power and open a new chapter in their own

history. I have already shown that the question of the Princes is a red herring across the path. European interests are absolutely safe so long as they are not in conflict with 'the interests of India.' I think this expression finds place in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact.

Look at the question from any stand-point you like, it will be found that the way to democratic *Swaraj* lies only through a properly constituted Assembly, call it by whatever name you like. All resources must, therefore, be exhausted to reach the Constituent Assembly before direct action is thought of. A stage may be reached when direct action may become the necessary prelude to the Constituent Assembly. That stage is not yet.

LETTER TO QAID-E-AZAM

"Your plan to amalgamate all the parties opposed to the Congress at once gives your movement a national character. If you succeed, you will free the country from communal incubus and, in my humble opinion, give a lead to the Muslims and others for which you will deserve the gratitude not only of the Muslims, but of all the other communities."

January 16, 1940.

Dear Qaid-e-Azam,

I hate to write 'Mr.' before any Indian name. It is so unnatural. Hence I have been writing of you as 'Janab Jinnah Sahib', according to the usage taught me by the late Hakim Sahib.[1] But Abul Kalam tells me that in the League circles you are always called "Qaid-e-Azam." And you will see from the enclosed[2] how the finishing touch was given by a telegram I received from Gulbarga. I hope you will accept my assurance that what I have done has been done in good faith and out of regard for you. If, however, you would have me address you otherwise, I shall respect your wishes.

The purpose of writing this letter is to send you the enclosed advance copy of the article I have sent to the *Harijan*. I have written it to further the end I have read in your recent message and actions. I know that you are quite capable of rising to the height required for the noble motive attributed to you. I do not mind your opposition to the Congress. But your plan to amalgamate all the parties opposed to the Congress at once gives your movement a national character. If you succeed, you will free the country from communal incubus and, in my humble opinion, give a lead to the Muslims and others, for which you will deserve the gratitude not only of the other Muslims but of all the other communities. I hope that my interpretation is correct. If I am mistaken, you will please correct me.

[1] Hakim Ajmal Khan.
[2] See the following article entitled *A Welcome Move*.

It is purely personal, private, friendly letter. But you are free to make public use of it if you think it necessary.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

A WELCOME MOVE

"Nothing can be better than that we should have in the country mainly two parties—Congress and non-Congress or anti-Congress, if the latter expression is preferred."

On the Deliverance Thanksgiving Day, declared by Jinnah Sahib, I had the following wire from Gulbarga Muslims.

"Deliverance Day greetings, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah Zindabad."

I took it as a message sent to ruffle my feelings. The senders little knew that the wire could not serve its purpose. When I received it, I silently joined the senders in the wish "Long Live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah." The Qaid-e-Azam is an old comrade. What does it matter that to-day we do not see eye to eye in some matters? That can make no difference in my good-will towards him.

But the Qaid-e-Azam has given me special reason for congratulating him. I had the pleasure of wiring him congratulations on his excellent Id-day broadcast. And now he commands further congratulations on forming pacts with parties who are opposed to the Congress policies and politics. He is thus lifting the Muslim League out of the communal rut and giving it a national character. I regard his step as perfectly legitimate. I observe that the Justice Party and Dr. Ambedkar's party have already joined Jinnah Sahib. The papers report, too, that Shri Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, is to see him presently. Jinnah Sahib himself has informed the public that many non-Congress Hindus have expressed their sympathy with him. I regard this development as thoroughly healthy. Nothing can be better than that we should have in the country mainly two parties—Congress and non-Congress or anti-Congress, if the latter expression is preferred. Jinnah Sahib is giving the word 'minority' a new and good content. The Congress majority is made up of a combination of Caste Hindus, non-Caste Hindus, Muslims, Christians,

Parsis and Jews. Therefore, it is a majority drawn from all classes, representing a particular body of opinion; and the proposed combination becomes a minority representing another body of opinion. This may any day convert itself into a majority by commending itself to the electorate. Such an alignment of parties is a consummation devoutly to be wished. If the Qaid-e-Azam can bring about the combination, not only I but the whole of India will shout with one acclamation: "Long Live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah." For, he will have brought about permanent and living unity for which, I am sure, the whole nation is thirsting.

UNITY *v.* JUSTICE—I

> "My belief is unshaken that without communal unity *Swaraj* cannot be attained through non-violence. But unity cannot be reached without justice between communities. Muslim or any other friendship cannot be bought with bribery. Bribery would itself mean cowardice and, therefore, violence."

A visitor came the other day and said: "You have done an irreparable injury to India by saying that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity. You should say instead that there is no *Swaraj* without justice between and to the different communities." I reasoned with my visitor, but he would not be consoled. He said: "You have offered to sell your soul to win the favour of your Muslim friends." I protested and said: "Surely, you know, the world knows, that I would not sell my soul to buy India's freedom. And if I want Muslim friendship, it is not for personal gratification but for India's sake. You are unjust to me." My visitor retorted with some passion: "I know your love for the country. If I had not known it, I would not have come to you specially. But your love has blinded you to the mistake you have made and are making. You do not know what Hindus say and do. For fear of offending Muslims, they suffer because they believe in you. I do beseech you to replace 'unity' with 'justice'." It was no use my arguing with my friend. And I had no time. I promised to deal with the question in these columns. The promise soothed him. I do not know that my answer will.

My belief is unshaken that without communal unity *Swaraj* cannot be attained through non-violence. But unity cannot be reached without justice between communities. Muslim or any other friendship cannot be bought with bribery. Bribery would itself mean cowardice and, therefore, violence. But if I give more than his due to my brother, I do not bribe him nor do I do any injustice. I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity may easily be-

come Shylock's justice. I must, however, take care that the generosity is not done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done.

I cannot, therefore, drop the idea of unity or the effort for it. But what is wanted is not so much justice as right action. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's reply to me,[1] as published in the Press, however, dashes to the ground all hope of unity if he represents the Muslim mind. His repudiation of the natural meaning I put upon his action in making common cause with the different political groups has created a unique situation. His picture of India as a continent, containing nations counted according to their religions, if it is realized, would undo the effort the Congress has been making for over half a century. But I hope that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's opinion is a temporary phase in the history of the Muslim League. Muslims of the different provinces can never cut themselves away from their Hindu or Christian brethren. Both Muslims and Christians are converts from Hinduism or are descendants of converts. They do not cease to belong to their provinces because of change of faith. Englishmen who become converts to Islam do not change their nationality. I hope Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah does not represent the considered opinion even of his colleagues.

[1] See *Appendix*—I.

UNITY *v.* JUSTICE—II

"Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity in order to justify itself has got to be strictly just. Therefore, it should not be at the expense of any single interest."

Q. In your article *Unity* v. *Justice*, you say that if you give more than his due to your brother, you neither bribe him nor do you do an injustice. You say: "I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity is done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done." I submit that justice and generosity cannot go hand in hand. As Dryden has rightly observed: "Justice is blind, it knows nobody." Besides, you can be generous to the weak, meek and the humble, not to one who in the arrogance of his strength seeks to coerce you into submission. To give more than his due to such a person is not generosity, but cowardly surrender. Though Hindus are numerically stronger, their majority, as you yourself have pointed out, is only fictitious and actually they are the weaker party. Besides, if generosity is to be shown to the Muslims, the only organization that is competent to offer it is the Hindu Mahasabha. What right has a third party to be generous to one of the two parties to a dispute at the other party's expense ?

A. In my article referred to by you, I have dealt with general principles, not with particular minorities. Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity in order to justify itself has got to be strictly just. Therefore, it should not be at the expense of any single interest. Hence, there cannot be any question of sacrificing some minority or minorities for the benefit of any minority. You are right again in contending that generosity has to be shown to the weak and the humble, and not to the bully. Nevertheless I would say, on behalf of the bully, that even he is entitled to justice, for immediately you brush aside the bully and be unjust to him, you justify his bullying. Thus, the only safe—not to put it higher—rule of conduct is to do generous justice, irrespective of the character of the minority. I am quite sure that where there is strictest justice, the question of majority and minority would not arise. The bully is a portent and is an answer to some existing circumstance, as, for in-

stance, cowardice. It is often forgotten that cowardice can be unjust. The fact is that cowards have no sense of justice. They yield only to threat or actual use of force. I do not know that there is any question of choice between a coward and a bully. The one is as bad as the other, with this difference that the bully always follows the coward in point of time.

In a previous issue, I have admitted that the proper organization to enter into settlements is the Hindu Mahasabha so far as Hindus are concerned, or any such organization. The Congress endeavours to represent all communities. It is not by design but by the accident of Hindus being politically more conscious than the others, that the Congress contains a majority of Hindus. As history proves, the Congress is a joint creation of Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Hindus, led by Englishmen, be it said to the credit of the latter. And the Congress, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, retains that character. At the present moment, a Muslim divine is the unquestioned leader of the Congress and for the second time becomes its President.[1] The constant endeavour of Congressmen has been to have as many members as possible drawn from the various communities, and, therefore, the Congress has entered into pacts for the purpose of securing national solidarity. It cannot, therefore, divest itself of that function, and, therefore, although I have made the admission that the Hindu Mahasabha or a similar Hindu organization can properly have communal settlements, the Congress cannot and must not plead incapacity for entering into political pacts so long as it commands general confidence.

[1] Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

USE OF FORCE AGAINST MUSLIMS

"'The Congress will not coerce Muslims or any minority. That would not be a non-violent approach. The greatest coercion is British coercion. And the Congress is impatient to get out of that coercion."

Q. You talk of complete independence from British and at the same time of settling the question of minorities through a Constituent Assembly. This means that, if Muslims do not listen to you, you would want to use British forces to compel them to submit to your will.

A. This question simply ignores my own position and, so far as I know, the Congress position. The Congress cannot want independence and the use of British forces at the same time. But that is not all. The Congress will not coerce Muslims or any minority. That would not be a non-violent approach. The greatest coercion is British coercion. And the Congress is impatient to get out of that coercion. My hope in desiring a Constituent Assembly is that, whether the Muslims are represented by the Muslim League mentality or any other, the representatives, when they are face to face with the reality, will not think of cutting up India according to religions, but will regard India as an indivisible whole and discover a national, *i.e.*, Indian, solution of even specially Muslim questions. But if the hope is frustrated, the Congress cannot forcibly resist the express will of the Muslims of India. Needless to say, the Congress can never seek the assistance of British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force, singly or with British assistance, on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force.[1] I would be ruled by them, for it would still be

[1] The proposal to vivisect India is a contribution to imperialistic growth. For, vivisection can only be made by the aid of the British bayonet or through a deadly civil war. I hope the Congress will be party to neither game.

—*Harijan* : Nov. 11, 1939.

Indian rule. In other words, the Congress will have only a non-violent approach to every question and difficulty arising. But just as it is possible that Muslim representatives to the Constituent Assembly may wear another hue than that of the Muslim League, it is also possible that the others may be non-Congressmen. In that event, the British will be where they are, only they will be wooed by both the parties alternately and will remain the architects of India's destiny. For, then, with the Congress swept away, non-violence will be blown to the winds and naturally the infinitely superior violence of the British, aided by the willing co-operation of the wooing party, will easily rule India. For, the only force matched against British force is that of non-violence, incomplete though it is, of the Congress.

MY ANSWER TO QAID-E-AZAM

"The Constituent Assembly, as conceived by me, is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal questions. If there is no agreement, the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved."

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reported to have said:

"Mr. Gandhi has been saying for the last 20 years that there cannot be any *Swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity. Mr. Gandhi is fighting for a Constituent Assembly. May I point out to Mr. Gandhi and the Congress that they are fighting for a Constituent Assembly which we cannot accept? Therefore, the idea of a Constituent Assembly is impracticable and unacceptable. Mr. Gandhi wants a Constituent Assembly for purposes of ascertaining the views of Muslims, and if they do not agree, he would then give up all hope and then will agree with us. If there exists the will to come to a settlement with the Muslim League, then why does not Mr. Gandhi, as I have said more than once, honestly agree that the Congress is a Hindu organization and that it does not represent anything but the solid body of Hindus? Why should Mr. Gandhi not be proud to say: 'I am a Hindu and the Congress is a Hindu body.' I am not ashamed of saying that I am a Muslim and that the Muslim League is the representative of Muslims. Why all this camouflage, why this threat of civil disobedience, and why this fight for a Constituent Assembly? Why should not Mr. Gandhi come as a Hindu leader and let me meet him proudly representing the Mussalmans?"

My position is and has been clear. I am proud of being a Hindu, but I have never gone to anybody as a Hindu to secure Hindu-Muslim unity. My Hinduism demands no pacts. My support of *Khilafat* was unconditional. I am no politician in the accepted sense. But whatever talks I had with Qaid-e-Azam, or any other, have been on behalf of the Congress which is not a Hindu organization. Can a Hindu organization have a Muslim divine as President and can its Working Committee have 4 Muslim members out of 15? I still maintain that there is no *Swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity[1]. I can never be

[1] *Referring to communal unity in his speech before the Subjects Committee at Ramgarh Congress,* 1940, *Gandhiji said:*

party to the coercion of Muslims or any other minority. The Constituent Assembly, as conceived by me, is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal questions. If there is no agreement, the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved. The Constituent Assembly or any body of elected representatives can be questioned. But who can question the sole representative capacity of the elected delegates to the Constituent Assembly? I cannot understand the Muslim opposition to the proposed Constituent Assembly. Are the opponents afraid that the Muslim League will not be elected by Muslim voters? Do they not realize that any Muslim demand made by the Muslim delegates will be irresistible? If the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren, who will be able to resist them? But, surely, it is permissible to dispute the authority of the 50,000 Muslims who listened to Qaid-e-Azam to represent the feelings of 8 crores of Indian Muslims.

"We are all equal before our Maker—Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, worshippers of one God. Why, then, do we fight among ourselves?

"We are all brothers—even the Qaid-e-Azam is my brother. I have meant all that I have said about him, never has a frivolous word escaped my lips, and I say that I want to win him over. A speaker said that I would not fight until I had won him over, and he was right. There was a time when there was not a Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy. To-day, I have forfeited that confidence and most of the Urdu Press pours abuse on me. But I am not sorry for it. It only confirms me in my belief that there is no *Swaraj* without a settlement with the Mussalmans.

"You will perhaps ask, in that case, why am I talking of a fight. I do so in order to have a Constituent Assembly which means agreement and settlement. But if the Mussalmans will have nothing to do with it, I will understand that there is no settlement. I am also a reader of Quran like them, and I will tell them that the Quran makes no distinction between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. But if they feel that they should have the Heaven without the Hindus, I will not grudge it to them."

MY POSITION

"As a man of non-violence, I cannot forcibly resent the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it."

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan has, in his criticism of my reply to Qaid-e-Azam, put some questions which I gladly answer. I must adhere to my statement that I have never spoken to anybody on the communal question as a Hindu. I have no authority. Whenever I have spoken to anybody I have spoken as a Congressman, but often only as an individual. No Congressman, not even the President, can always speak as a representative. Big things have always been transacted on this planet by persons belonging to different organizations coming together and talking informally in their non-representative capacity. I fear that even the answer I am about to give must be taken as representing nobody but myself. In the present instance, I have reason to say that probably I do not represent any single member of the Working Committee. I am answering as a peacemaker, as a friend (and may I say, brother) of the Mussalmans.

As a man of non-violence, I cannot forcibly resent the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For, it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation. Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. To assent to such a doctrine is for me denial of God. For, I believe with my whole soul that the God of the Quran is also the God of the Gita, and that we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God. I must rebel against the idea that millions

of Indians, who were Hindus the other day, changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion.

But that is my belief. I cannot thrust it down the throats of the Muslims who think that they are a different nation. I refuse, however, to believe that the eight crores of Muslims will say that they have nothing in common with their Hindu and other brethren. Their mind can only be known by a referendum duly made to them on that clear issue. The contemplated Constituent Assembly can easily decide the question. Naturally, on an issue such as this there can be no arbitration. It is purely and simply a matter of self-determination. I know of no other conclusive method of ascertaining the mind of the eight crores of Muslims.

But the contemplated Constituent Assembly will have the framing of a constitution as its main function. It cannot do this until the communal question is settled.

I still believe that there can be no *Swaraj* by non-violent means without communal unity. And eight crores of Muslims can certainly bar the way to peaceful freedom.

If, then, I still talk of civil disobedience, it is because I believe that the Muslim masses want freedom as much as the rest of the population of this country. And assuming that they do not, civil disobedience will be a powerful means of educating public opinion—whether Muslim, Hindu or any other. It will also be an education of world opinion. But I will not embark upon it unless I am, as far as is humanly possible, sure that non-violence will be observed both in spirit and in the letter. I hope the Nawabzada has no difficulty in believing that whatever is gained by civil disobedience will be gained for all. When India gets the power to frame her own constitution, the Muslims will surely have a decisive voice in shaping their own future. It will not be, cannot be, decided by the vote of the majority.

Lastly, I suggest to the Nawabzada that he wrote in haste the lines about the President of the Congress. For, they are contrary to the history of our own times. And he was equally in haste in suggesting that "the sole

objective of the Congress under Mr. Gandhi's fostering care has been the revival of Hinduism and the imposition of Hindu culture on all and sundry." My own objective is not the issue in the terrible indictment. The objective of the Congress is wholly political. Nothing is to be gained by making statements that are incapable of proof. So far as my own objective is concerned, my life is an open book. I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures. I am at home wherever I go, for I regard all religions with the same respect as my own.

A BAFFLING SITUATION

"I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean."

A question has been put to me:

"Do you intend to start general civil disobedience although Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah has declared war against Hindus and has got the Muslim League to pass a resolution favouring vivisection of India into two? If you do, what becomes of your formula that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity?"

I admit that the step taken by the Muslim League at Lahore creates a baffling situation.[1] But I do not regard it so baffling as to make civil disobedience an impossibility. Supposing that the Congress is reduced to a hopeless minority, it will still be open to it, indeed it may be its duty, to resort to civil disobedience. The struggle will not be against the majority, it will be against the foreign ruler. If the struggle succeeds, the fruits thereof will be reaped as well by the Congress as by the opposing majority. Let me, however, say in parenthesis that, until the conditions I have mentioned for starting civil disobedience are fulfilled, civil disobedience cannot be started in any case. In the present instance, there is nothing to prevent the Imperial Rulers from declaring their will in unequivocal terms that henceforth India will govern herself according to her own will, not that of the Rulers as has happened hitherto. Neither the Muslim League nor any other party can oppose such a declaration. For, the Muslims will be entitled to dictate their own terms. Unless the rest of India wishes to engage in internal fratricide, the others will have to submit to Muslim dictation if the Muslims will resort to it. I know no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims

[1] For Lahore Resolution (March, 1940) of the Muslim League, see *Appendix*—II.

to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division.

Thus, so far as I am concerned, my proposition that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity holds as good to-day as when I first enunciated it in 1919.

But civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It is open even to one single person to offer it, if he feels the call. It will not be offered for the Congress alone or for any particular group. Whatever benefit accrues from it, will belong to the whole of India. The injury, if there is any, will belong only to the civil disobedience party.

But I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean. The "two-nation" theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims of India are converts to Islam or are descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food, has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbour. They dress alike. I have often found it difficult to distinguish by outward sign between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. The same phenomenon is observable, more or less, in the South among the poor who constitute the masses of India. When I first met the late Sir Ali Imam, I did not know that he was not a Hindu. His speech, his dress, his manners, his food were the same as of the majority of the Hindus in whose midst I found him. His name alone betrayed him. Not even that with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. For, his name could be that of any Hindu. When I first met him, I did not know that he was a Muslim. I came to know his religion when I had his full name given to me. His nationality was written in his face and manner. The reader will be surprised to

know that for days, if not months, I used to think of the late Vithalbhai Patel as a Muslim, as he used to sport a beard and a Turkish cap. The Hindu law of inheritance governs many Muslim groups. Sir Mahomad Iqbal used to speak with pride of his Brahmanical descent. Iqbal and Kitchlew are names common to Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations. Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.

And is Islam such an exclusive religion as Qaid-e-Azam would have it? Is there nothing in common between Islam and Hinduism or any other religion? Or, is Islam merely an enemy of Hinduism? Were the Ali Brothers and their associates wrong when they hugged Hindus as blood-brothers and saw so much in common between the two? I am not now thinking of individual Hindus who may have disillusioned the Muslim friends. Qaid-e-Azam has, however, raised a fundamental issue. This is his thesis:

> "It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time.
>
> "The Hindus and Muslims have two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither inter-marry, nor interdine together, and, indeed, they belong to different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single State, one as a numerical minority and the other as majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a State."

He does not say some Hindus are bad; he says Hindus as such have nothing in common with Muslims. I make

bold to say that he and those who think like him are rendering no service to Islam; they are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam. I say this because I feel deeply hurt at what is now going on in the name of the Muslim League. I should be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Muslims of India against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them. It is a misfortune that to-day they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter."

Thus writes a Khan Bahadur from Delhi:

"In your article in *Harijan* of April 6, you observe as follows:

'I should be failing in my duty if I did not warn the Mussalmans against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.'

"I will request you to consider the Hindu-Muslim problem from our point of view. The stumbling block to any negotiations for a settlement of the communal question has been the refusal of the Congress to recognize the All-India Muslim League as the authoritative and sole representative body of the Indian Mussalmans. The Congress claims that it speaks for whole India and that it has on its rolls a considerable number of Mussalmans. The very fact that the Congress had made several attempts to come to terms with Mr. Jinnah shows that it is not fully confident of its representative character, as far as the Mussalmans are concerned. But do you not honestly feel that the Congress Mussalmans are the real stumbling block in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity, and that it is for their sake that the Congress is not making a serious effort to solve the problem? Believe me, they are a lazy lot who are enjoying their present position because they are in the Congress.

"You know what the Muslim masses did to your President in Calcutta where for years he had been leading Id prayer. You also know that they have no courage to address a Muslim meeting to convert the Mussalmans to their point of view. You blame the British for creating Princes, Moderates and Khan Bahadurs like me. You blame the British for trying to create another Ulster in India. Has not the Congress created equivalent Moderates and Khan Bahadurs in Azads, Asaf Alis and Kidwais? Is not the action of the Congress tantamount to creation of a Muslim Ulster.

"You may cite the case of Mr. Asaf Ali succeeding in the municipal elections of Delhi. I may inform you that but for a division in the Provincial League and bad handling of the situ-

ation, Mr. Asaf Ali would have never won the election. I may inform you that even as it is, when Delhi Congress wanted to contest the municipal elections as a party, Mr. Asaf Ali, who is now a member of the Congress Working Committee, had declined to take a Congress ticket. Therefore, Mr. Asaf Ali's election was not a test case; and if you pardon my saying so, even now let Mr. Asaf Ali re-seek election on a Congress ticket, and I am confident that any League candidate would defeat him. You will thus realize that your being baffled by the Lahore Resolution of the League is not justified when Mussalmans have ceased to trust in your life's mission regarding Hindu-Muslim unity. On the other hand, they are convinced that the sole aim of the Congress, for the last ten years at least, has been to divide and rule the Mussalmans. I will beg of you to reconsider your attitude towards the League. Please don't trust the Congress-site Mussalmans, for they are not only the 'Mir Jafars' amongst us, but the enemies of Hindu-Muslim accord and India's freedom."

Just now, I am inundated with letters of protest from Muslim friends. Most writers do not argue. They give themselves satisfaction by abusing. Pyarelal, who opens and deals with the daily post, gives me only those letters which he thinks I should see. Of these, I take notice of those I think I must. In some cases, I answer them privately. Therefore, correspondents who never receive acknowledgment either through *Harijan* or the post should know the reason.

There are some Muslim letters of sympathy, too. One of them says that in his house he has to listen to wildest criticism of me. No adjective is too bad to use. Much criticism he knows to be false. What is he to do, he asks. Is he to leave the house, or is he to engage in endless disputation and convert his house into a bear-garden? I have advised my correspondent neither to leave the house nor to engage in a discussion. If he can, he may put in a mild word when he knows that manifest falsehood is being uttered and believed.

The correspondence in my possession and the Urdu Press cuttings from journals owned by Muslims go to show that I am believed to be the arch-enemy of Islam and Indian Muslims. If I was at one time acclaimed as their greatest friend and suffered the praise, I must suffer, too, to be described as an enemy. Truth is known only to

God. I am confident that in nothing that I am doing, saying or thinking, I am their enemy. They are blood-brothers and will remain so, though they may disown me ever so much.

Now, for the Khan Bahadur's letter.

I have never understood the reason behind the demand for the recognition by the Congress of the All-India Muslim League as the sole and authoritative Muslim body. Why should such an admission be demanded or expected? How is it compatible with a genuine desire for a settlement?

The Congress attempts to represent all. But it has never demanded recognition as such from anybody. The all-India status has to be deserved. But whether it be deserved or not, admission thereof is a superfluity. The Congress has never claimed that it represents the whole of Indian Muslims. It has not claimed to represent any single community wholly. But it does claim to represent every single national interest irrespective of class, caste, colour or creed. Even that need not be admitted by those who deal with it. It should be sufficient consolation to each party that it is considered by the other important enough to seek friendship with.

The Congress has always frankly admitted that it has not on its register as many Muslims as it would like. But it has been proud to have had the support of many eminent Muslims. Hakim Sahib Ajmal Khan was the tallest among them. Qaid-e-Azam himself was a great Congressman. It was only after Non-co-operation that he, like many other Congressmen belonging to several communities, left it. Their defection was purely political. They disliked direct action.

It is wrong to swear at the Nationalist Muslims simply because they are attached to the Congress. If they become members of the League, they will become worthy Muslims! My correspondent simply does not know how much Congress Muslims are trying to bring about unity. When unity is re-established, as it must be, I have no doubt that Nationalist Muslims will get their due both from Hindus and Muslims.

It is torture of truth to suggest that they are so many Mir Jafars. They are betraying neither Islam nor India. They are as true Muslims according to their lights as members of the League claim to be. It is equal torture of truth to suggest that the Congress is following the British method of divide and rule. The Congress is a political party with one single aim. It would be a bad day for India if the Congress could be proved to have mean motives. Is it mean to woo Muslim opinion by the fairest means imaginable? Rightly or wrongly, the Congress does not believe in water-tight compartments on a communal basis. If religion is allowed to be, as it is, personal concern and a matter between God and man, there are many dominating common factors between the two which will compel common life and common action. Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them. It is a misfortune that to-day they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter.

It will, perhaps, now be clear why I can have no concern with Asaf Ali Sahib's case. I would grant that he would be beaten in a contest between him and a Leaguer. Let it be further granted that such will be the case in the majority of such contests. It will in no way weaken my position. It will prove the superior organizing ability of the League and its popularity among the Muslims. I have not doubted either. My case is incredibly simple. I must not be called upon to make any admission about the status of the League before thinking of unity through the League. I must not be disloyal to the Muslim nationalists, however insignificant they may be considered to be. I ask the Khan Bahadur, the writer of the letter under discussion, to exert his influence to bring the two communities together.

WHAT THE *MASNAVI* SAYS

"How I wish the beautiful truth embedded in these verses will be taken to heart by every one of us. Is not the Pakistan movement a denial of the obvious truth?"

I gladly publish the following sent to me by Advocate Rustomji Andhyarujina of Bombay:

"In the latest issue of *Harijan*, while dealing with the letter of a Khan Bahadur from Delhi, you write the following lines of eternal truth:

'Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them.'

"These lines remind me of the immortal words of a famous Persian poet put into the mouth of God who addresses Moses in verse 14 of the poem, *viz.*,

'Thou hast come to this earth to unite; thou hast not come to this earth to separate.'

"Original:

To barae Vasl kardan amadi
Na barae Fasl kardan amadi.

"I give below a faithful translation of the whole poem in order to show the beauty and the grandeur of the truth contained in the above verse:

"Moses once saw on the road a shepherd who was exclaiming thus:

'Oh, God Almighty!
Tell me where Thou art, so that I may become
Thy servant, stitch Thy heavy shoes, comb Thy hair,
Kiss Thy hand, rub Thy feet, and sweep the floor for Thee to sleep.
If Thou wouldst fall ill in future, like Thy kith and kin, I would grieve for Thee.
Oh, My Lord! my life is sacrificed to Thee, together with my children and all the property that I own.
Aye, all my sheep are sacrificed to Thee: every call of '*baeba*' of mine addressed to my way-ward sheep is for Thy remembrance!'

"In this strain that shepherd was speaking when Moses spoke to him thus: 'Whom art thou addressing?'

"He replied: 'I am addressing Him who created us, the One from whom became manifest this earth and this revolving celestial globe (*charkh*).'

"Moses exclaimed: 'Alas, thy head has become arrogant and discourteous; thou hast ceased to be a Mussalman; thou hast turned an infidel.

'If thou dost not tie up (stop) these words in thy palate, the fire (of Hell) will spread out and consume the whole world.'

"The poor shepherd cried in agony: 'Oh Moses, thou hast stitched my mouth; the repentance that thou hast caused in me has consumed my soul.'

"He tore his robe into tatters, heaved a burning sigh, set his face towards the forest and disappeared in its midst.

"A voice reached Moses from God saying: 'Why didst thou separate My slave from Me?

'Thou hast come to this earth to unite; thou hast not come to this earth to separate.

'Knowest thou that We do not see the exterior nor the words; We see only the interior and the real thing.'

"No sooner did Moses hear these words of censure from the Almighty God than he ran after the shepherd in the thickness of the wood.

"At last, Moses was able to find him out in the wilderness. The Prophet told him: 'Good news for thee! for, God has given me permission to tell thee, do not worry about the conventional modes and forms whilst addressing Me, but instead speak out whatever thy narrow heart prompts thee to speak.'"

—FROM *Masnavi-e-Molavi*

How I wish the beautiful truth embedded in these verses will be taken to heart by every one of us. Is not the Pakistan movement a denial of the obvious truth?

HINDU-MUSLIM TANGLE

"Religion binds man to God and man to man. Does Islam bind Muslim only to Muslim and antagonize the Hindu? Was the message of the Prophet peace only for and between Muslims and war against Hindu or non-Muslims?.... Those who are instilling this poison into the Muslim mind are rendering the greatest disservice to Islam."

The partition proposal has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth. There can be no compromise with it. At the same time I have said that, if the eight crores of Muslims desire it, no power on earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition violent or non-violent. It cannot come by honourable agreement.

That is the political aspect of it. But what about the religious and the moral which are greater than the political? For, at the bottom of the cry for partition is the belief that Islam is an exclusive brotherhood, and anti-Hindu. Whether it is against other religions, it is not stated. The newspaper cuttings in which partition is preached describe Hindus as practically untouchables. Nothing good can come out of Hindus or Hinduism. To live under Hindu rule is a sin. Even joint Hindu-Muslim rule is not to be thought of. The cuttings show that Hindus and Muslims are already at war with one another and that they must prepare for the final tussle.

Time was when Hindus thought that Muslims were the natural enemies of Hindus. But as is the case with Hinduism, ultimately it comes to terms with the enemy and makes friends with it. The process had not been completed. As if nemesis had overtaken Hinduism, the Muslim League started the same game and taught that there could be no blending of the two cultures. In this connection I have just read a booklet by Shri Atulanand Chakrabarti, which shows that ever since the contact of Islam with Hinduism, there has been an attempt on the part of the best mind of both to see the good points of

each other, and to emphasize inherent similarities rather than seeming dissimilarities. The author has shown Islamic history in India in a favourable light. If he has stated the truth and nothing but the truth, it is a revealing booklet which all Hindus and Muslims may read with profit. He has secured a very favourable and reasoned preface from Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan and several other Muslim testimonials. If the evidence collected there reflects the true evolution of Islam in India, then the partition propaganda is anti-Islamic.

Religion binds man to God and man to man. Does Islam bind Muslim only to Muslim and antagonize the Hindu? Was the message of the Prophet peace only for and between Muslims and war against Hindus or non-Muslims? Are eight crores of Muslims to be fed with this which I can only describe as poison? Those who are instilling this poison into the Muslim mind are rendering the greatest disservice to Islam. I know that it is not Islam. I have lived with and among Muslims not for one day, but closely and almost uninterruptedly for twenty years. Not one Muslim taught me that Islam was an anti-Hindu religion.

CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

"I know this touch-me-not-ism is deep-rooted in Hinduism as it is practised to-day. But there is no reason why it should be tolerated by Congressmen. If they will be correct in their behaviour, they will pave the way for a radical transformation of Hindu society."

Several correspondents protest against my referring to the arguments advanced in favour of partition. They say that Islam is not exclusive, and that it teaches universal brotherhood and toleration. I have never denied this claim. It was because of my knowledge of Islam that I felt grieved over the arguments which go to prove the contrary. Almost every Muslim writing I take up now-a-days contains disparagement of Hindus and Hinduism. It cannot be otherwise, if the case for partition is to be proved. But my correspondents are angry when I point out the anomaly. They say I have hastily come to the conclusion from isolated writings of unimportant Muslims. Unfortunately, the arguments referred to by me have proceeded from important Muslims.

But where the writers score over me is in regard to Hindu untouchability. They say in effect: "You should be ashamed of bringing the charge of untouchability against the Muslim League. First cast out the beam from the Hindu eye before you attempt to deal with the mote in the Muslim eye. Has not the Hindu maintained for a thousand years complete boycott of Muslims? He will not drink or eat with him. He will not inter-marry. He will not even let his house to him. Can you conceive a more effective isolation of a whole community than the Hindu has carried out? Will it not be a just nemesis if the Muslim now turns round and pays you in your own coin?"

I have admitted as much. Whatever the Muslims do by way of retaliation will be richly deserved by Hindus. My question was and is, should they do so? Does it behove a great political party to play upon religious prejudices?

Whatever the Muslim League does or does not do, it behoves thoughtful Hindus to take note of the deserved taunt and purge Hinduism of its exclusiveness. It will not be protected by artificial barriers which have no sanction in ancient Hinduism or reason. Well did Maulana Abul Kalam Azad say the other day how sick he was of hearing the cry at railway stations of Hindu and Muslim tea or water. I know this touch-me-not-ism is deep-rooted in Hinduism as it is practised to-day. But there is no reason why it should be tolerated by Congressmen. If they will be correct in their behaviour, they will pave the way for a radical transformation of Hindu society. The message of anti-untouchability does not end in merely touching the so-called untouchables. It has a much deeper meaning.

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PAKISTAN AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

"When we have learnt wisdom, we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature. I, therefore, swear by the Constituent Assembly."

Q. The 'two-nations' theory is by way of a counter-blast to the demand for a Constituent Assembly which is about as absurd as the other thing. To me, the idea of a Constituent Assembly ignores the existing conditions. 95 per cent of our people are illiterate, and nearly cent per cent are swayed by religious prejudices; and then there is the additional factor of corruption. And the fatal objection to a Constituent Assembly is that without a genuine desire on the part of the majority to give effect to safeguards, the best of these are bound to prove unreal.

A. Surely, you cannot speak of the Constituent Assembly side by side with Pakistan. The latter is wrong, as I conceive it, in every way. There is nothing wrong in the idea of a Constituent Assembly. At its worst, dangers surround its formation. Every big experiment is beset with dangers. These risks must be taken. Every effort should be made to minimize them. But there seems to me to be nothing like a Constituent Assembly for achieving the common purpose. I admit the difficulty for illiteracy. Indeed, adult suffrage was introduced at the instance of Muslim Nationalists including the late Ali Brothers. The danger of corruption is also there. The greater the organization the less felt is the effect of corruption, because it is so widely distributed. Thus, in the Congress there are much corruption and jealousy, but they are confined to those few who run the machinery. But the vast body of Congressmen are untouched by these defects, though they profit by the good the Congress does. The danger you mention about safeguards will be reduced to the vanishing point if they come through a Constituent Assembly. For, safeguards laid down by representatives elected by the adult Muslim population will depend for their safety not on the goodwill or honesty

of the majority, but on the strength of the awakened Muslim masses. Fatality really attaches to your wrong conception of the majority, not to a Constituent Assembly. There is a majority of Hindus undoubtedly, but we observe that in popular political assemblies, parties are not rigidly divided according to religious opinions, but they are according to political and other opinions. The curse of communalism became intensified by the introduction of separate electorates. The cry for partition is the logical outcome, but it is also the strongest condemnation of separate electorates. When we have learnt wisdom, we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature. I, therefore, swear by the Constituent Assembly. The Muslim vote will surely decide the issue so far as their special interest is concerned. Arguing communally, therefore, the fear, if there is any about a Constituent Assembly, should surely be on the part of the Hindus. For, if the Muslim vote goes in favour of partition, they have either to submit not to one but many partitions or to a civil war. As things are, all satisfy themselves by passing resolutions and seeing their names in print. In practice, all of us remain where we are in a state of subjection. A Constituent Assembly is a reality. It will not be a debating or legislative, irresponsible body. By registering its final decision, it will decide the fate of millions of human beings. You may oppose it. If you are successful in your opposition, there is the dread prospect of anarchy, not an orderly civil war. There seems to me to be no solution of the painful deadlock except through a Constituent Assembly.

AN ENGLISH SUGGESTION

"Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination. I have lived under the latter, though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India."

An English friend writes thus:

"It is still reasonable at present to proceed on the assumption that the Muslims would accept something a good deal less than 'Pakistan.' But the trouble is that the longer the time that elapses without any compromise solution being reached, the stronger and more insistent will be the cry for 'Pakistan,' so that in the end civil war or partition will be the only alternatives. I think the view held by some that there is nothing to be done but to wait upon events is fatal. It is up to the British now to use all their powers of persuasion and statesmanship to *compel* the parties to settle.

"The crux of the matter is, who is to control power at the Centre—Hindus or Muslims? Over this the Congress must be prepared to make great concessions. The principles of parliamentary democracy and majority rule must be jettisoned. They are not applicable when two distinct civilizations have got to lie down together. Majority rule from the Muslim point of view will mean or, at any rate, contain the menace of the dominance of one civilization over the other. If the Congress do not recognize this quickly, I am afraid that partition will become, if not the only alternative, the best one—which will give you an idea of how bad the other alternatives will be!

"If the Congress can be brought to see the need for great concessions on this point, I am sure compromise solutions can be found. I hold this necessity to be vital."

Of course, the British Government can do much. They have done much by force. They can make the parties come to a solution by force. But they need not go so far. What they have done hitherto is to prevent a proper solution. In proof of my statement, I commend the esteemed correspondent to the columns of *Harijan*. The only thing the British Government have to do is to change their attitude. Will they? They can retain

their hold on India only by a policy of divide and rule. A living unity between Muslims and Hindus is fraught with danger to their rule. It would mean an end of it. Therefore, it seems to me that a true solution will come with the end of the rule, potentially, if not in fact.

What can be done under the threat of Pakistan? If it is not a threat but a desirable goal, why should it be prevented? If it is undesirable and meant only for the Muslims to get more under its shadow, any solution would be an unjust solution. It would be worse than no solution. Therefore, I am entirely for waiting till the menace is gone. India's independence is a living thing. No make-believe will suit. The whole world is in the throes of a new birth. Anything done for a temporary gain would be tantamount to an abortion.

I cannot think in terms of narrow Hinduism or narrow Islam. I am wholly uninterested in a patch-work solution. India is a big country, a big nation composed of different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another, each complementing the rest. If I must wait for the completion of the process, I must wait. It may not be completed in my day. I shall love to die in the faith that it must come in the fulness of time. I should be happy to think that I had done nothing to hamper the process. Subject to this condition, I would do anything to bring about harmony. My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal. Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination. I have lived under the latter, though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

> "The demand for partition puts an end to all efforts for unity for the time being. I hold that communal understanding is not a pre-requisite to the British doing justice on their part. When they feel that they want to recognize India's right of self-determination, all the difficulties that they put forth as obstacles in their path will melt away like ice before the sun's rays."

A God-fearing political friend, among several other things, wrote to Gandhiji regarding the Hindu-Muslim problem as follows:

> "Again we have to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. For that we should call a conference of all the communal leaders and party leaders. If we make an effort beforehand, we might become united by the time the Government is willing to call the Constituent Assembly. No time should be lost. The demands of the Mussalmans will mount up as the time goes on. I am certain God will help us to attain unity, if we try for it in right earnest and without delay. God has put the reins of the country in your hands; you alone can make or mar her fate."

Replying to the above in an article entitled Non-Co-operation, *Gandhiji wrote:*

Hindu-Muslim unity is a morsel by itself. But my friend is on the wrong track when he suggests that unity should be hastened for fear of Muslims raising their demands. Demands against whom? India is as much theirs as anybody else's. The way to unity lies through just demands once for all, not through ever-increasing demands, whether just or unjust. The demand for partition puts an end to all effort for unity for the time being. I hold that communal understanding is not a pre-requisite to the British doing justice on their part. When they feel that they want to recognize India's right of self-determination, all the difficulties that they put forth as obstacles in their path will melt away like ice before the sun's rays. The right of self-determination means the right of determination by every group and ulti-

mately every individual. The demand for a Constituent Assembly presumes that the determination of the groups and individuals will coincide. Should it happen otherwise and partition becomes the fashion, either we shall have partition or partitions rather than foreign rule, or we shall continue to wrangle among ourselves and submit to foreign rule, or else have a proper civil war. Anyway, the present suspense cannot continue. It has to end one way or the other. I am an optimist. I have every hope that when we come to grips, Hindus, Muslims, and all others will throw in their weight in favour of India which all will claim as their own.

THE HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

"India is a poor country full of Hindus and Mussalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated."

In his closing speech before the Congress Working Committee at Bombay, Gandhiji referred to the Hindu-Muslim question as it had been raised during the debate, and said:

If a conflict is there in store for us, who can prevent it? We have to be prepared even for anarchy and chaos, but we must have the faith that non-violence cannot result in chaos. But if somehow disorders take place, they will be a test of our non-violence. Non-violence is a force that gains in intensity with the increase in the violence that it has to deal with. I hope that you will get that power of non-violence before I die. But there is a message I should like to reach the ears of every Mussalman. India cannot win Independence if eight or more crores of Mussalmans are opposed to it. But I cannot believe that all of them are so opposed, until it is proved to me by the vote of every adult Mussalman. Let them declare that they want to have their political salvation apart from that of Hindus. India is a poor country full of Hindus and Mussalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated—not because I am a Hindu, for I am speaking from this platform as representative of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all else. But I will say to them: 'Vivisect me before you vivisect India. You shall not do what even the Moghuls, who ruled over India for over two centuries, did not do.' What I have said about the Muslims applies equally to Sikhs. If 30 lakhs of Sikhs will obstruct Indian Independence, we shall deal with them non-violently. Non-violent *Swaraj* cannot be won except by non-violence. There are other obstacles, too, imposed by the existence of an alien power. But we must strain every nerve to achieve communal peace. Islam means peace. That peace can not be confined to the Muslims. It must mean peace for the whole world.

COMMUNAL UNITY—I

"A superficial study of British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time-being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people."

Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this unity. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean mere political unity which may be imposed. It does, however, mean an unbreakable heart-unity. The first thing essential for achieving such unity is for every Congressman, whatever his religion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew etc., shortly, every Hindu and non-Hindu. He has to feel his identity with every one of the millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan. In order to realize this, every Congressman will cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for the other faiths as he has for his own.

In such a happy state of things, there would be no disgraceful cry at the stations such as "Hindu water" and "Muslim water" or "Hindu tea" and "Muslim tea". There would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in schools and colleges, no communal schools, colleges and hospitals. The beginning of such a revolution has to be made by Congressmen without any political motive behind the correct conduct. Political unity will be its natural fruit.

The implication of such heart-unity may seem startling, though it is the logical necessity. Congressmen cannot aim at parliamentary power in opposition to persons of other faiths. Congressmen, therefore, will refrain, so long as these differences last, from entering the parliamentary arena.

We have long been accustomed to think that power comes only through legislative assemblies. I have re-

garded this belief as a grave error brought about by inertia or hypnotism. A superficial study of British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time-being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people. It has been my effort for the last twenty-one years to convince the people of this simple truth. Civil disobedience is the store-house of power. Imagine a whole people unwilling to conform to the laws of the legislature, and prepared to suffer the consequences of non-compliance! They will bring the whole legislative and executive machinery to a stand-still. The police and the military are of use to coerce minorities, however powerful they may be. But no police or military coercion can bend the resolute will of a people out for suffering to the uttermost.

And parliamentary procedure is good only when its members are willing to conform to the will of the majority. In other words, it is fairly effective only among compatibles.

Here in India, we have been pretending to work the parliamentary system under separate electorates which have created artificial incompatibles. We can never bring about living unity out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform. Such legislatures may function. But they can only be a platform for wrangling and sharing the crumbs of power that may fall from rulers, whoever they may be. These rule with a rod of iron, and prevent the opposing elements from flying at one another's throats. I hold the emergence of complete independence to be an impossibility out of such a disgrace.

COMMUNAL UNITY—II

"Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They pre-supposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust."

Freedom will not come through parliamentary effort. Therefore, communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts. Without it, there can be no peace in the land. Even Pakistan can bring no peace, if there is no union of hearts. This union can come only by mutual service and co-operative work.

Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They pre-supposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust. How to get out of the tangle is the question. I want just now to confine myself to the four Muslim majority provinces. In them, there is natural Pakistan in the sense that the parliament majority can rule the minority. I hold it to be utterly wrong thus to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest can there be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice, or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular State has no concern.

Congressmen, if they are not to merge in the Hindus as Hindus, must rigidly abstain from the legislatures and local bodies governed by separate electorates. In these provinces, the separate electorates must be taken to have come from the Hindu demand in the supposed Hindu interest. But a Congress Hindu has no interest apart from his Muslim brother. Therefore, he must not enter the electoral bodies where Hindu and Muslim interests are falsely regarded as separate and even antagonistic. If he enters these bodies, he can do so only to divide the majority members, *i.e.*, to take sides with one Muslim party

or another. If I could make all Hindus Congress-minded, I would withdraw every Hindu member from these bodies and put the Muslim members on their honour. I would seek to influence them from outside these bodies by being friends with them and rendering disinterested service. I would be indifferent to their manning all the services. At the most, an infinitesimal percentage can have a share in them. And it is a superstition to suppose that these services can oppress a people who have become conscious of human dignity and human rights and know how to enforce them. Since the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus, in at least three Muslim majority provinces they have a rare opportunity of showing their non-violent strength, their disinterestedness, their utter freedom from the communal taint, and their ability to submit to the rule of their Muslim fellow-countrymen. They will do this not in a huff, but as true nationalists and friends of the Muslims. Remaining outside, they will probably better protect the just interests of Hindus as citizens. For, a Congress Hindu is not any the less a Hindu because he claims to represent equally, as he must, all the other faiths in himself. For, as I have said, so far as the State is concerned, its capacity for service stops short of the service of the different faiths, and the services it can render apply to all irrespective of their faiths. Therefore, Congressmen have a rare opportunity of showing undefiled nationalism in these provinces. They will incidentally show the other minorities that they have nothing to fear from the majorities if they know the true way. We must get out of the miasma of religious majorities and minorities. Why is a Parsi's interest different from a Hindu's or Muslim's, so far as the State is concerned? Did not Dadabhai and Pherozeshah rule the Congress while they lived not by Congress grace or patronage, but by right of service and merit? Did their rule injure any Hindu or Muslim interest? Were these interests ever in conflict on the Congress platform? And is not the Congress a voluntary State?

UNITARY METHOD

"In a well-regulated family the relations are governed by the unitary method. . . . What is true of a well-regulated family is equally true of a well-regulated society which is but an extended family."

Q. You seem to be advocating what you call the unitary method in the solution of many questions. Will you explain it a little more fully than you have done?

A. It is as simple as it is sure. A contract or pact is between two parties. There is also consideration passing from one to the other. Such was the Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League. The same thing could have been accomplished by the unitary method. Only then there would have been no compromise dictated by fear and distrust. The Congress could have done, according to its notion absolute justice, *i.e.*, yielded the maximum consistent with the welfare of the whole nation without the expectation of any consideration from the League. In a well-regulated family, the relations are governed by the unitary method. Thus, a father gives to his children not as a result of a pact. He gives out of love, a sense of justice without expecting any return therefor. Not that there is none. But everything is natural, nothing is forced. Nothing is done out of fear or distrust. What is true of a well-regulated family is equally true of a well-regulated society which is but an extended family. My advice about the adoption of two scripts by Hindus and Muslims is based on the unitary method. My equal love for all communities dictates its adoption. Properly applied, the method never fails. It disarms criticism and opposition. It pre-supposes a clean conscience and clean action. I propose to unfold in these columns the application of the method in all our communal relations. The views will be personal to me, as are all such since the Bardoli Resolution. They will be addressed to Congressmen for adoption only in so far as they appeal to their reason.

HINDU-MUSLIM PUZZLE

"As one representing all communities, I would expect not only Hindus but Congress-minded Muslims and others, too, to avoid the legislatures and elective bodies. These abstainers will hold the scales evenly between all communities and seek to affect the legislatures from outside. Whether they are many or only a few, they will play the rôle of wise men."

Q. In your proposed solution of the Hindu-Muslim puzzle, do you expect all the Hindus to abstain from the legislatures or only a part? If only a part, will not the most reactionary Hindus get in and make things worse than now? And if you expect Congressmen to affect the Muslim mind from outside, why can't you do the same and, perhaps, more effectively by being inside?

A. I do not expect all the Hindus to abstain. I know that all Hindu seats will be filled by non-Congress Hindus. Congress Hindus, if they go in, will be ground down between the two stones of the communal *chakki* without doing any good to anybody. I do not approach the question as a Hindu. I approach it as a Congressman, seeking to represent equally all communities. But for the artificial system introduced in the composition of the Indian legislatures, all the members would be representing not communities but their parties, grouped according to their non-communal shibboleths. As one representing all communities, I would expect not only Hindus but Congress-minded Muslims and others, too, to avoid the legislatures and elective bodies. These abstainers will hold the scales evenly between all communities and seek to affect the legislatures from outside. Whether they are many or only a few, they will play the rôle of wise men. If all listened to me, the communal question would disappear from our midst. By entering the legislatures the Congress Hindus become interlopers, and act weakly for fear of offending one party or the other. This I know, that at the present moment the legislatures are, and must become, part of the war machinery. They have no choice. They will not be allowed to function,

if they obstruct the war-effort. How could the rulers, whose sole occupation is to prosecute the war, do otherwise?

Q. Why not advise Congressmen to withdraw from the Provincial Legislatures, too, where the Hindus are in a majority?

A. Because I do not want the non-Muslim minority parties to act as if they were the majority and carry on the government in those provinces. It would be a false position to which the Congress would be a willing party, if the Congress members withdrew. In these provinces, therefore, abstention cannot solve the communal tangle, and will bring about an unintended and undesirable state of things.

TEST OF HONESTY

"The general tendency is to make use of the opportunities which seem to be open to you for seizing power. It is difficult for people to understand when I suggest that the opportunity is a trap."

Q. What you have said about Congressmen in the Muslim majority provinces is true enough. But your honesty will be tested by the readiness with which Congressmen follow your advice.

A. I must emphatically repudiate the test. I have begun to write about the subject in order to educate the Congress mind. If I had carried conviction to the members of the Working Committee, I would not have needed to preach my solution. It would have been reduced to practice long ago. But I failed. The step I have advised carries weighty implications without whose acceptance the solution has no meaning. One implication is confidence in the truth of one's step. I admit it is unusual. The general tendency is to make use of the opportunities which seem to be open to you for seizing power. It is difficult for people to understand when I suggest that the opportunity is a trap. To my mind, it has already proved to be so. But it is not so clear to average Congressmen. I hope, through these columns, to make clear what is at present obscure. Those who doubt my honesty do not help me or themselves. But whether they do or not, I must continue to preach so long as I hold to the truth of my solution.

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G.L.84

APPEAL TO QAID-E-AZAM

"I observe from Qaid-e-Azam's speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them. I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League."

I have been painfully but regularly going through the English weeklies that come to me and that are devoted to the cause of the Muslim League. I read them so as to keep myself informed of what the Muslim mind, as influenced by the Muslim League, thinks. Not a week passes but these weeklies contain what to me appear to be distortions of truth and vilification of the Congress and Congressmen and Hindus. What has prompted me to write these lines is a virulent attack on Hinduism in one of the weeklies. Here is an extract from the article:

"Hinduism is the greatest curse of India, and it is based on intolerance and inequality. To call one's self a 'Hindu' is to confess that one is reactionary and narrow-minded. No decent, civilized, honest and sincere human being, who knows what Hinduism is and what it stands for, would like to be known as a Hindu or join this faith of primitive barbarians. For, it is on barbarity that this so-called religion is based. No other word can describe the state of 97 per cent of the population who have been decreed by the gods and goddesses of this precious religion as impure and unclean beings, fit only to serve the remaining 3 per cent of the population....We would far rather suggest to the students to prepare in their laboratories of the mind deadly bombs which would completely smash and destroy Hinduism—the greatest menace to India's welfare and well-being."

I hope I shall not be told that the article in question is taken from another newspaper. It has been taken in order to hold up Hinduism to scorn. Though the founder of this paper is Qaid-e-Azam himself, and it is issued under the direction of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Hon. Secretary of the League, I fancy that they have not seen the article in question.

What will be the state of Hindus under Pakistan? Will they be suppressed as barbarians? There is no

attempt in the papers at looking at the other side. The policy adopted in the papers must lead to the promotion of bitterness and strife between the two communities. If the end is to be attained through strife and force, and not by persuasion and argument, I can have nothing to say. But I observe from Qaid-e-Azam's speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them. I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League.[1]

[1] *Defending the Indefensible :* I have read Qaid-e-Azam's answer to my appeal. It has caused me deep pain. I had expected a better response. The reproduction of the whole offending article would make worse reading. For, the whole of it is venomous. Qaid-e-Azam knows that I do not hesitate to criticize any party or person whenever the occasion demands criticism. I have more than once criticized unbecoming writings in the non-Muslim Press.

I do not know the writer of the offending article. If he is a Hindu, it makes Qaid-e-Azam's defence of it all the worse for it. I am sorry that Qaid-e-Azam has resorted to special pleading for defending the indefensible. This unexpected defence of an article designed to wound deep susceptibilities makes ominous reading.—*Harijan:* March 22, 1942.

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TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM.
T. KALLUPPATTY POST.
MADURA DT.

'THE NAKED FACT'

"If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division."

Characterizing the British Government's proposal[1] *for dissolving political deadlock as 'ill-fated' and 'too ridiculous to find acceptance anywhere', Gandhiji deplored that its bearer should have been Sir Stafford Cripps 'acclaimed as a radical among radicals and a friend of India', and further wrote:*

But it is no use brooding over the past or British mistakes. It is more profitable to look within. The British will take care of themselves, if we will take care of ourselves. Our mistakes or rather defects are many. Why blame the British for our own limitations? Attainment of Independence is an impossibility till we have solved the communal tangle. We may not blind ourselves to the naked fact. How to tackle the problem is another question. We will never tackle it so long as either or both parties think that Independence will or can come without any solution of the tangle. There are two ways of solving what has almost become insoluble. The one is the royal way of non-violence, and the other of violence. In the first way, the formal consent or co-operation of the other party is unnecessary. If there is a dispute between two boys over the ownership of an apple, the non-violent way is to leave the apple for the other party to take, well knowing that it would mean non-co-operation on the surrendering party's part. The second way is the usual way of violence. There the parties fight with each other till one is for the time being worsted. All interested in freedom have to make the choice. I suppose the choice has already been made by the chief actors. But the rank

[1]See *Appendix*—III.

and the file do not know their own minds. It is necessary for them, if they can, to think independently and take to non-violent action in terms of unity. It consists in Hindus and Muslims on the wayside fraternizing with one another, if they believe that joint life is a perfect possibility, nay a necessity. Whether those who believe in the 'two-nations' theory and communal partition of India can live as friends co-operating with one another, I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation, having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I see, such a preparation is silently going on, on behalf of both parties. That way lies suicide. Each party will probably want British or foreign aid. In that case, good-bye to Independence. The fight will, then, range round not Independence, but the imaginary apple after the manner of the imaginary boys. I dare not contemplate the actuality. I should not like to be its living witness. I would love to see a joint fight for Independence. In the very process of securing Independence, it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels. But if we have not, it will be then only time to quarrel, if we must.

NOT AN INCITEMENT

"I claim Indians of all religions as my equal brothers, whether they believe me or not. I would, therefore, love to prevent every one from quarrelling."

Q. You have written:

"If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation....no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see, such a preparation is silently going on, on behalf of both parties."

As far as the Muslims are concerned, I can say with better knowledge than you that there is no such preparation. It would be foolish in the midst of the present armageddon. But since you are apparently aware of the preparation to fight on the part of Hindus, is it not criminal for you not to prevent your co-religionists from this suicidal activity? Your article is both cowardly and mischievous; indeed, it is an incitement to the Hindus.

A. This is the mildest indictment I have picked up from many I have received. Even from this, much poison has been removed. It is, perhaps, wise to notice some of the criticism to which I am exposed. I must not mind it. It has been my lot throughout my public career. I suppose it is that of every public servant. But when the criticism is ignorant, as this is, it harms the critic and the cause he espouses. I take notice of it in the hope that sober men will use their influence to restrain ignorant criticism. I have no special knowledge of the preparation on behalf of the Hindus.

All the knowledge I have is derived from the speeches of the leaders of both the parties and from the cuttings I receive from correspondents. They are proof positive of the preparations to which I have referred. But if what you say is right, in spite of the writings in the Muslim Press, no preparation on one side alone can possibly provoke strife. It takes two to make a quarrel. You would be right, if I did not do so, in saying that it would

be criminal on my part not to prevent my "co-religionists from this suicidal activity." You write about my co-religionists. I recognize none in such matters. Nor do they recognize me. For, I claim Indians of all religions as my equal brothers, whether they believe me or not. I would, therefore, love to prevent every one from quarrelling. All I write in these columns is designed to make reason rather than the sword the arbiter between rival parties. Hence, the sentence you quote from my writing. I invite you to help me in my mission of peace. You can begin by understanding me and my writings.

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ROTATORY GOVERNMENT

"When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems....The arbiter, then, will be either the sword or reason."

Q. In order to solve the communal tangle, why not divide India into two sections as far as population goes, *e.g.*, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis in one, and Hindus, Sikhs and Depressed Classes in the other. Let the first section rule for the period of five years by means of elected representatives, and the second section come in similarly later. Would this not allay the present mistrust? As for Princes' India, could a Committee of elected Princes be entrusted with the work of governing all the States?

A. Your question reads well on paper; but your suggestion, if acted upon, must break down in practice. The act of government is not the simple thing you seem to imagine. What you suggest may work as a toy when the strings are pulled by armed authority. It won't be our government. The puller of the strings will govern. That is the old way. I have presented the better way—the non-violent method. In either case, the first condition is that every trace of foreign authority should be removed from the land. Then and then only shall we know our real selves—our strength as well as our weaknesses. When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems. We won't, then, be governed in the neat way mentioned by you. The arbiter, then, will be either the sword or reason.

THE DIFFERENCE

"I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims, and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements, will look to it for support and will get it."

Q. You have repeated in your interview to the Press in Bombay, what you have said often, that nothing can prevent the Muslims from having what they want unless the objectors would fight over the issue. What is the difference between you and Shri Rajgopalachari's attitude?

A. Though he has quoted me in his support, I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and cheese. He yields the right of secession now to buy unity in the hope of keeping away the Japanese. I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin. My statement amounts to the enunciation of the proposition that I cannot prevent my neighbour from committing a sin. Shri Rajgopalachari would be party in the sin, if the neighbour chooses to commit it. I cannot be party. What is more, I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims, and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements, will look to it for support and will get it. Their interest is greater than the independence of their country. No one need throw my other statement in my face, *viz.*, that there is no independence without unity. I do not withdraw a word of it. It is an obvious truth. From its contemplation I have discovered the formula of inviting the British Power to withdraw. Their withdrawal does not by itself bring independence. It may induce unity or it may lead to chaos. There is also the risk of another Power filling in the vacancy if it is there. If, however, the withdrawal is orderly and voluntary, the British not only gain a moral height but

secure the ungrudging friendship of a great nation. I wish all conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of foreign domination. If they do not, any understanding with them will be like a house built on sand. Fear of the Japanese occupation of India has blinded C. R. to obvious truth. Independence sheds all fear—fear of the Japanese, of anarchy, and of the wrath of the British lion.

ARBITRATION

"I have come to the conclusion that real heart-unity, genuine unity, is almost an impossibility unless and until British Power is withdrawn and no other Power takes its place, that is to say, when India not only feels but is actually independent without a master in any shape or form."

Q. Would you review the situation created by the Allahabad A. I. C. C. meeting[1]? What would you say regarding Rajaji's quoting your words regarding Pakistan in support of his latest move?

A. I would leave the Allahabad resolutions to themselves. C. R. has quoted me correctly, and I repeat that, if Muslims want anything—no matter what it is—no power on earth can prevent them from having it. For, the condition of refusal will be to fight. Supposing Muslims ask for something which non-Muslims do not want to give or could not give, it means a fight. This applies to both the communities. If the Hindus want a thing and if they are all united in the demand, no non-Hindus can resist them, unless they want to fight. But my hope is that some day or other all parties will come to their senses and not insist on their demands being accepted, and consent to go to arbitration. It is an age-long method and a civilized method, and I hope it will be accepted.

But it is from the frustration of every effort made to bring about unity by me, among many others, that has arisen the, for me, logical step that not until British Power is wholly withdrawn from India can there be any real unity, because all parties will be looking to the foreign Power. For the time being it is British, but it may be French, Russian, Chinese; even then it would be the same thing. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that real heart-unity, genuine unity, is almost an impossibility unless and until British Power is withdrawn and no

[1] For A. I. C. C.'s Resolution, refer to *Appendix*—IV.

other Power takes its place, that is to say, when India not only feels but is actually independent without a master in any shape or form. Nevertheless, I shall try and welcome every effort for peace, well knowing that it is likely to be fruitless.

FOR RAJAJI

"If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst, with the limits which Nature has put upon our understanding, we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth."

There is no doubt that Rajaji is handling a cause which has isolated him from his colleagues. But his worst enemy will not accuse him of any selfish motive behind the extraordinary energy with which he has thrown himself into the controversy of which he is the author. It reflects the greatest credit on him. He is entitled to a respectful hearing. His motive is lofty. It is a noble thing to strive for Hindu-Muslim unity, equally noble to strive to ward off the Japanese intrusion. In his opinion, the two are intertwined.

Hooliganism is no answer to his argument. The disturbances at his meetings are a sign of great intolerance. Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents, or, having listened, make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst, with the limits that Nature has put upon our understanding, we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it, if there is any. I plead, therefore, with all who are disturbing Rajaji's meetings not to do so, but to give him a patient and respectful hearing, to which he is entitled.

The reader knows that I hold Rajaji to be in the wrong. He is creating a false atmosphere. He does not believe in Pakistan, nor do the Nationalist Muslims and others who concede the right of separation or seces-

sion. They and Rajaji say that that is the way to wean the Muslim League from the demand for separation. I am surprised that many Muslims rejoice over a concession of doubtful value. I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it. It should be enough to state the proposition that nothing can prevent the Muslim League from having it, if the Muslims really want it. They will take it by the vote or the sword unless they will submit to arbitration. But all this can only happen when the British Power is entirely withdrawn and the Japanese menace has abated. Till then, there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan or any other 'stan'. It is to-day Englistan and may be to-morrow Japanistan, if we do not take care. If all who consider India to be their home now and for ever will pull their full weight to deliver it from the present and the impending peril, and when both the perils are finally removed, it will be time to talk of Pakistan and other 'stans' and to come to an amicable dicision or fight. No third party will or should decide our fate. It should be reason or the sword. Rajaji's method leads us to the blind alley, unless his admirable and patriotic persistence opens a way unknown to him or any of us. Whatever the fate of different opinions, my plea is for mutual toleration and respect.

DIFFERENCES VERY REAL

"What is needed is avoidance of anger and intolerance, the twin enemies of correct understanding."

The following is taken from Gandhiji's reply to a correspondent, who wanted to know his views regarding Rajaji's plan:

As for communal unity, the third party being removed, unity will follow as day follows night. Unity will not precede but will succeed freedom. To-day, we do not even know that the goal of the Congress and the League is one. And you cannot bribe the League to co-operate for independence. Either the League believes that India is as much the home of Muslims as of non-Muslims, or it does not. If it does, it must first free the home from bondage before partitioning it. To-day, there is nothing to partition. After ridding the home of the foreign occupant, it can demand partition if it wishes, and get it by negotiation or force. However, if it does not believe in India being the home of the Muslims, there is no question of negotiations for freeing India from bondage.

Rajaji's plan is, in my opinion, wholly unnatural. He wants to thrust himself on the British Power, which does not want him, for, as the possessor by right of conquest, it gets all it wants. In order to thrust himself on the British, he gives the League the right of self-determination, which every single individual has, whether the others recognize it or not. Rajaji does not like partition and hugs the belief that his superfluous recognition of the inherent right will enable him to avoid partition.

I advise my correspondent not to worry over our differences. We know and love each other enough to let time correct the error, whether it lies on my side or his. Meanwhile, a frank and bold admission of differences and their exact nature makes for healthy education of public opinion. What is needed is avoidance of anger and intolerance, the twin enemies of correct understanding.

"In actual life it is impossible to separate us into two nations. We are not two nations. Every Muslim will have a Hindu name if he goes back far enough in his family history. Every Muslim is merely a Hindu who has accepted Islam. That does not create nationality."

The following account of a talk between Gandhiji and Mr. Louis Fischer, a well-known American journalist, is taken from the latter's book: "A Week With Gandhi" The talk took place on June 6, 1942, *at Sevagram* (*C. P.*):

I asked Gandhi for his opinion about the proposals of C. Rajagopalachari who had participated as Congress representative in the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps in April (1942). Rajaji, as the Indians call him, is one of the wisest men in India, an old friend and associate of Gandhi's, and the father of the wife of Gandhi's youngest son, Devadas. Ever since the failure of the Cripps proposals, Rajaji had been making many speeches urging the Congress Party and the Muslim League to get together on the basis of a Congress acceptance of Pakistan—a separate Muslim State. When I asked Gandhi about Rajaji's programme, he said: "I don't know what his proposals are. I think it unfortunate that he should argue against me and that I should argue with him. So I have given orders that, as far as we are concerned, the discussion should be suspended. But the fact is that I do not know what Rajaji proposes."

"Isn't the essence of his scheme," I asked, "that the Hindus and Muslims collaborate and in common work perhaps discover the technique of peaceful co-operation?"

"Yes," Gandhi replied, "but that is impossible. As long as the third power, England, is here, our communal differences will continue to plague us. Far back, Lord Minto, then Viceroy, declared that the British had to keep Muslims and Hindus apart in order to facilitate the domination of India."

I told Gandhi I had seen that Minto quotation. "This has been the principle of British rule ever since," Gandhi emphasized.

"I have been told," I said, "that when Congress Ministries were in office in the Provinces during 1937, 1938, and 1939, they discriminated against Muslims."

"The British Governors of those Provinces have officially testified that that is not so," Gandhi asserted sharply.

"But isn't it a fact," I persisted, "that in the United Provinces, Congress and the Muslims entered into an electoral pact because Congress was not sure of winning, that, then, Congress won a sweeping victory and refused to form a Coalition with the Muslims?"

"No," Gandhi contradicted. "There were four Muslim Ministers in the United Provinces Government formed by the Congress. There were no representatives of the Muslim League, but there were Muslims. No. We have always tried to collaborate with Muslims. It is said that the Maulana (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Congress, is a Muslim scholar) is a puppet in our hands. Actually, he is the dictator of Congress. He is its President. But the Cripps proposals have divided Hindus from Muslims more than ever. Thanks to the British Government, the divergence between the two communities has been widened."

"It was said," I volunteered, "that Congress leaders and Muslim Leaguers came to New Delhi to talk to Cripps and talked to Cripps but did not talk to one another."

"It was not only said," Gandhi agreed, "it was dis graceful. But it was the fault of the Muslim League. Shortly after this war broke out, we were summoned to meet the Viceroy at New Delhi. Rajendra Prasad (a member of the Congress Working Committee) and I went to speak for Congress, and Mr. Jinnah for the Muslim League. I asked Jinnah to confer with us in advance and face the British Government unitedly. We agreed to meet in New Delhi, but when I suggested that we both demand independence for India, he said: 'I do not want independence.' We could not agree. I urged that we

at least make the appearance of unity by going to the Viceroy together; I said he could go in my car or I would go in his car. But we spoke to the Viceroy in different tones and expressed different views."....

"In actual life," Gandhi insisted, "it is impossible to separate us into two nations. We are not two nations. Every Muslim will have a Hindu name if he goes back far enough in his family history. Every Muslim is merely a Hindu who has accepted Islam. That does not create nationality. If some influential Christian divine converted us all to Christianity, we should not become one nation if we really were two nations, and in the same manner the two religions of India do not make two nationalities. Europe is Christian, but Germany and England, so much alike in culture and language, are grimly at one another's throats. We, in India, have a common culture. In the North, Hindi and Urdu are understood by both Hindus and Muslims. In Madras, Hindus and Muslims speak Tamil; and in Bengal, they both speak Bengali and neither Hindi nor Urdu. When communal riots take place, they are always provoked by incidents over cows and by superstitions that create the trouble, and not our separate nationalities."

"Caroe (the Viceroy's Secretary for Foreign Affairs who worked for many years as a British official in the Punjab) and Jenkins (a high British official in the Department of Supplies)," I said, "told me that there were no communal differences in the villages, and I heard from others, too, that the relations between the two religious communities are peaceful in the villages. If that is so, that is very important because India is ninety per cent village."

"It is so," Gandhi stated, "and that, of course, proves that the people are not divided. It proves that the politicians divide us...."

I slept after lunch, then recorded my morning talk with Gandhi and later read from the lengthy report of the Simon Indian Statutory Commission, which was presented to the Viceroy in May 1930. On page 59 of Vol. I, this passage occurs:

"There is among the Hindu minority in Sind a feeling that the independence of the (British) Commissioner is too great, while on the Mahomedan side there is a well-known cry for separation from Bombay. This demand has gathered strength not so much in the homes of the people or among the Mahomedan cultivators of Sind, as among the leaders of Mahomedan thought all over India to whom the idea of a new Muslim Province, contiguous to the predominantly Muslim areas of Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province, and the Punjab, naturally appeals as offering a stronghold against the fear of Hindu domination."

I began my interview with Gandhi this afternoon by reading this passage to him. I said it confirmed his statement to me this morning that the Muslim people are much less interested in separation than their leaders.

"Of course," he acquiesced.

"But," I went on, "how real are the fears of the Muslim leaders? Perhaps, they understand better than the Muslim masses that the Hindus desire to dominate. Can you say quite objectively that the Hindus have not tried to gain the upper hand?"

"Here and there," Gandhi said, "individuals may entertain regrettable ideas. But I can say that the Congress movement and the Hindus in general have no desire to control. The Provinces must enjoy broad autonomy. I myself am opposed to violence or domination and do not believe in powerful Governments which oppress their citizens or other states. So how could I wish for domination? This charge is a cry originated by leaders to obtain a better hold on their people."

UNITY TO FOLLOW FREEDOM

"When bondage is done away with, not merely the two organizations, but all parties will find it to their interest to come together and make the fullest use of liberty in order to evolve a National Government suited to the genius of India."

Replying to the question of the Nagpur correspondent of The Hindu, *Madras, as to what had led him to declare now that communal unity would follow freedom, whereas he had been saying for years that there could be no* Swaraj *without Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhiji said:*

Time is a merciless enemy, if it is also a merciful friend and healer. I claim to be amongst the oldest lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity and I remain one even to-day. I have been asking myself why every whole-hearted attempt made by all, including myself, to reach unity has failed, and failed so completely that I have entirely fallen from grace and am described by some Muslim papers as the greatest enemy of Islam in India. It is a phenomenon I can only account for by the fact that the third power, even without deliberately wishing it, will not allow real unity to take place. Therefore, I have come to the reluctant conclusion that the two will come together almost immediately after the British Power comes to a final end in India. If independence is the immediate goal of the Congress and the League, then, without needing to come to any terms, all will fight together to be free from bondage.

When bondage is done away with, not merely the two organizations but all parties will find it to their interest to come together and make the fullest use of liberty in order to evolve a National Government suited to the genius of India. I do not care what it is called. Whatever it is, in order to be stable, it has to represent the masses in the fullest sense of the term. And, if it is to be broad-based upon the will of the people, it must be predominantly non-violent. Anyway, upto my last breath,

I hope I shall be found working to that end, for I see no hope for humanity without the acceptance of non-violence. We are witnessing the bankruptcy of violence from day to day. There is no hope for humanity if this senseless, fierce mutual slaughter is to continue.

TO MUSLIM CORRESPONDENTS

> "I do not know how to get rid of the distrust. 'Give Pakistan,' say my critics. I answer: 'It is not in my giving.' If I felt convinced of the rightness of the demand, I should certainly work for it side by side with the League. But I do not. I would like to be convinced. Nobody has yet told me all its implications."

"How can you think of a mass movement for liberation without first closing with Muslims?" ask Muslim correspondents, whose letters fill my file.

I used at one time to think like my correspondents. But I see that for the moment I cannot reach the Muslim mind. The Muslim League blocks my way. I try to read the League newspapers. They give me a peep into the League mind, in so far as they represent it. In their opinion, I am thoroughly untrustworthy. Even my services during the *Khilafat* days wear for them a sinister meaning. I am quite clear in my mind that this is a passing phase. I am not aware of having done a single disservice to any Muslim case or Muslim person. Thank God, even to-day, I claim numerous Muslim friends.

I do not know how to get rid of the distrust. "Give Pakistan", say my critics. I answer: "It is not in my giving". If I felt convinced of the rightness of the demand, I should certainly work for it side by side with the League. But I do not. I would like to be convinced. Nobody has yet told me all its implications. Those that are described in the anti-Pakistan Press are too terrible to contemplate. But I cannot take them from the Opposition. Only the protagonists know what they want and mean. I plead for such an exposition. Surely, Pakistanis want to convert the Opposition, not to force them. Has an attempt been ever made to meet the Opposition in a friendly manner and to convert them? I am sure the Congress is willing to be converted, let alone me.

But what I am to do meanwhile? I feel that now is the time for India to play an effective part in the fortunes

of the War, if she becomes free from British servitude. I am convinced, too, that nothing stands in the way of that freedom except British unwillingness to give up India as the happy hunting-ground for the British that she has been for three centuries. If she gives up India, she might as well give up fighting, says the Imperialist. If such is the case, what is all this war for? The original fighters are Great Britain and Germany. Was India the hidden stake between the two? This is all speculation, all I know. The truth will be known presently. Thinking Indians cannot idle away their time. I think that even a large number, if not all of us, prepared to undergo any sacrifice that may fall to our lot, would impress the British rulers that they can no longer hold India as a British possession. I believe, too, that such a number is available. Needless to say, their action must be non-violent, irrespective of their belief, as even a military man's has often to be, on behalf of his cause. The fight has been conceived in the interest of the whole of India. The fighters will gain no more than the poorest Indian. They will fight, not to seize power, but to end the foreign domination, cost what it may. What will happen after? If ever we reach that stage, will depend upon how we act when the all-powerful British hand is withdrawn. We may quarrel among ourselves or we may adjust our quarrels and agree to set up ordered rule on behalf of the people. It may be a democratic constitution or unadulterated autocracy or oligarchy. The conception is not that of a settlement with the British Government. That could happen only if there were a settlement between the principal parties, and, as a preliminary, the Congress and the League. But that, so far as I can see, is not to be.

Therefore, the only settlement with the British Government can be that their rule should end leaving India to her fate. Thus, assuming that the British leave, there is no Government and no constitution, British or other. Therefore, there is no Central Government. Militarily the most powerful party may set up its rule and impose it on India. If the people submit, Muslims may declare Pakistan and nobody may resist them. Hindus

may do likewise, Sikhs may set up their rule in territories inhabited by them. There is no end to the possibilities. And, to all this idle speculation let me suggest one more addition. The Congress and the League, being best organized parties in the country, may come to terms and set up a Provisional Government acceptable to all. And this may be followed by a duly elected Constituent Assembly.

The movement has only one aim—that is of displacing the British Power. If that happy event comes about and it is followed by a stable Government, it will most assuredly decide the fate of the War—I shall hope in a non-violent manner. India can show no other strength during this War at any rate. Why should not Muslims, who believe in Pakistan, but also believe in independent India, join such a struggle? If, on the other hand, they believe in Pakistan through British aid and under British aegis, it is a different story. I have no place in it.

FOR MUSLIM FRIENDS

> "To-day, there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. It is Englistan. So, I say to all India, let us first convert it into the original Hindustan and then adjust all rival claims."

I have read with attention Qaid-e-Azam's reply to my article in *Harijan*. "Pakistan", according to him, "in a nutshell" "is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign State." This sovereign State can conceivably go to war against the one of which it was but yesterday a part. It can also equally conceivably make treaties with other States. All this can certainly be had, but surely not by the willing consent of the rest.

But it seems he does not want it by consent. For, he says: "Pakistan is an article of faith with Muslim India and we depend upon nobody except ourselves for the achievement of our goal." How is one to offer one's service in these circumstances?

But, later, he gives me hope, for he says: "Show your sincerity and frankness for an honourable settlement." In order to show both, I wrote the article to which the Qaid-e-Azam has objected. How else is one to show sincerity and frankness except through one's action and speech or pen?

Let me state my limitations. I cannot speak as a mere Hindu, for my Hinduism includes all religions. I can speak only as an Indian. If Pakistan, as defined above, is an article of faith with him, indivisible India is equally an article of faith with me. Hence, there is a stalemate.

But to-day there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. It is Englistan. So, I say to all India, let us first convert it to the original Hindustan and then adjust all rival claims. This is surely clear. After the restoration of India to the nation, there will be no Central Government. The representatives will have to construct it. It may be one Hindustan or many Pakistans.

If the Qaid-e-Azam really wants a settlement, I am more than willing and so is the Congress. He will forgive me for suggesting that his reply leaves on one the impression that he does not want a settlement. If he wants one, why not accept the Congress President's offer that Congress and League representatives should put their heads together and never part until they have reached a settlement. Is there any flaw or want of sincerity in this offer?[1]

[1] *Congress and League*:

Q. Maulana Sahib has made what I consider a very wise and patriotic suggestion that the Congress Working Committee will nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League when the latter so desire to do. I trust it will commend itself to you. If it does, I should like you publicly to support it. It will go a long away to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together.

A. I have no hesitation in endorsing Maulana Sahib's suggestion. No one would be more glad than I if, with or without my endorsement, the two can come together. I have always felt that there is something radically wrong with both that the most obvious thing, *viz*., the coming together of the wise men of both, with a will to find a solution of the deadlock, has not happened.—*Harijan*: May 17, 1942.

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HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"I am devoting my time and energy and I am even prepared to lay down my life for the mission which has been entrusted to me by God. Hindu-Muslim unity is dear to my life. I have no mental reservation on the issue of Pakistan. Pakistan cannot be away from Hindustan. Let both and all of us strive for the attainment of freedom of India."

Addressing a most momentous session of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on August 8, 1942, *just a day before his arrest, Gandhiji feelingly referred to the communal tangle and said:*

There was a time when every Muslim was professing that India was his motherland. The Ali Brothers believed in it. I am not prepared to believe for a moment that it was a lie or bluff. I would prefer to be ignorant rather than to doubt my colleagues. Thousands of Hindus and Muslims have told me that if the Congress is really serious to solve the communal tangle and establish permanent unity, it can be achieved during my life-time only. From my very childhood, I am a firm believer in Hindu-Muslim and communal unity. From my very school days, I have a firm conviction in the unity of India.

When I had been to Africa, I undertook a brief for a Muslim client. I championed their cause there. I never distrust them. I did not return from Africa as a disappointed or as a defeated man. I do not care for the abuses which are being hurled on me by some of my Muslim friends. I do not know what I have done that has offended them. I am undoubtedly a worshipper of cow. It is my belief that every creature on this earth is the creation of God. My friends, especially the Muslims, Maulana Bari and Maulana Azad, can testify to this fact. I dine with the Muslims. I dine with all without any consideration to their caste or religion.

I hate none and there is no hatred in me. The late Maulana Bari was my host in Lucknow. He was a thorough gentleman. It was the time when there was no

mutual distrust or suspicion. Jinnah Sahib has been a Congressman in the past. He seems now to be misguided. I pray long life for him and wish that he may survive me. A day will certainly dawn when he will realize that I have never wronged him or the Muslims. I have the fullest confidence in the sincerity of the Muslims. I will never talk ill of them even if they kill me. They have every right to form any opinion of me, but I still continue to be the same man of the old days. Muslims may, in the heat of the moment, forget themselves and abuse me. Islam does not teach to abuse. If the Muslims of India are the true followers of the Holy Prophet, then let them follow his teachings faithfully. Their abuses are worse than bullets to me, but still I am prepared to welcome them.

A world federation could only be established by mutual agreement. I would pray to my Muslim brothers to judge for themselves dispassionately which is right and which is wrong. Let the issue be decided by a tribunal and let us all abide by the verdict of the tribunal. If the Muslim League is not prepared to accept this offer, then how can they expect to force the scheme upon others by mere coercion?

Let them persuade their fellow countrymen to their point of view and make them agreeable to the scheme of Pakistan. If they failed to convince and convert, this would lead to internal strife. I have no desire to live to witness such a tragedy. Islam never teaches its followers to hate any one. It preaches universal brotherhood and a spirit of mutual tolerance. I am devoting my time and energy and I am even prepared to lay down my life for the mission which has been entrusted to me by God. Hindu-Muslim unity is dear to my life. I have no mental reservation on the issue of Pakistan. Pakistan cannot be away from Hindustan. Let both and all of us strive for the attainment of freedom of India.

Jinnah Sahib does not seem to believe in the Congress programme and in the Congress demand. But I cannot wait any longer for India's freedom. I cannot wait till Jinnah Sahib is converted for the immediate consummation

of Indian freedom. I am very impatient. Communal unity is undoubtedly essential for country's freedom, but you must know it is freedom for all and not for any particular community. I wholeheartedly endorse the Maulana Sahib offer[1] to the British that India be handed over to any community. I would not be sorry if the authority is transferred to the Muslim masses.

India is the homeland of Indian Muslims. For instance, take the case of my son Harilal. He had embraced Islam. By changing his religion, can he disown his nationality and country? Supposing he is able to change his nationality and country, all the same he cannot disown his father. Under the persuasion of his mother, he wrote to me a letter. My wife told me that she was not sorry because her son had changed his religion, but was sorry because he was a drunkard. My grandson went in search of his father but when he found him, he saw that he was addicted to vices........(*Press Message Incomplete*).

[1] More light is thrown on this offer in the succeeding article.

MAULANA AZAD'S OFFER TO THE LEAGUE

"Provided the Muslim League co-operated fully with the Congress demand for immediate independence without the slightest reservation, subject, of course, to the proviso that Independent India will permit the operations of the Allied armies in order to check Axis aggression and thus help both China and Russia, the Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it to-day exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India, including the so-called Indian India."

The following are extracts from correspondence which passed between a Muslim citizen of Bombay and Gandhiji, a few hours before the latter's arrest on August 9, 1942:

Letter To Gandhiji

"To-day I had a friendly talk with Mr. Mahadev Desai about the statement of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad regarding the handing over of powers to the Muslim League. As I had doubts about the implications of that statement, I asked Mr. Desai to explain it to me. Public interest demands that it should be clarified and elucidated. In consequence of my talk with him, I took upon myself to see Mr. Jinnah and convey to him the explanation given by Mr. Desai. Mr. Jinnah told me that he would carefully consider any offer or proposition. He had made serious allegations about the offer, but if he was convinced of the *bona fides* behind it, he would gladly withdraw the same and express regret. This, I think, was most reasonable on his part."

Gandhiji's Reply

"With reference to your letter giving me the purport of your conversations to-day with the Qaid-e-Azam, I wish to say in as clear language as possible, that when in a *Harijan* article I reproduced Maulana Azad's published offer to the Muslim League, I meant it to a be serious offer in every sense of the term. Let me explain it again for your edification. Provided the Muslim League co-operated fully with the Congress demand for immediate independence without the slightest reservation, subject, of course, to the proviso that Independent India will

permit the operations of the Allied armies in order to check Axis aggression and thus help both China and Russia, the Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it to-day exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India, including the so-called Indian India. And the Congress will not only not obstruct any Government that the Muslim League may form on behalf of the people, but will even join the Government in running the machinery of the Free State.

"This is meant in all seriousness and sincerity. Naturally, I cannot give all the implications of the offer and its far-reaching consequences in a hurried reply to your note. You are at liberty to show this to the Qaid-e-Azam and to any person who is interested in the question of immediate independence for India and of a Free India."

IN RESPONSE TO QAID-E-AZAM

"Why should not both you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men determined on finding a common solution, and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or interested in it?"

The following letter written by Gandhiji to Jinnah Sahib on May 4, 1943, from detention in Aga Khan Palace, Poona, was withheld by the Government.[1] *It was released for publication on May 18, 1944, by Shri Pyarelal, Gandhiji's Private Secretary:*

DETENTION CAMP: MAY 4, 1943

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

When sometime after my incarceration Government asked me for a list of newspapers I would like to have, I included the *Dawn* in my list. I have been receiving it with more or less regularity. Whenever it comes to me, I read it carefully. I have followed the proceedings of the League as reported in the *Dawn* columns. I noted your invitation to me to write to you.[1] Hence this letter.

I welcome your invitation. I suggest our meeting face to face rather than talking through correspondence. But I am in your hands.

[1] *The following Press Communique was issued by the Government of India on May 26, 1943, announcing their decision not to forward Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Jinnah Sahib written from the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp:*

"The Government of India have received a request from Mr. Gandhi to forward a short letter from himself to Mr. Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him. In accordance with their known policy in regard to correspondence or interviews with Mr. Gandhi, the Government of India have decided that this letter cannot be forwarded and have so informed Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah. They are not prepared to give facilities for political correspondence or contact to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement, which he has not disavowed, and thus gravely embarrassing India's war effort at a critical time. It rests with Mr. Gandhi to satisfy the Government of India that he can safely be allowed once more to participate in the public affairs of the country, and until he does so, the disabilities from which he suffers are of his own choice."

I hope that this letter will be sent to you and if you agree to my proposal, the Government will let you visit me.

One thing I had better mention. There seems to be an "if" about your invitation. Do you say I should write only if I have changed my heart? God alone knows men's hearts.

I would like you to take me as I am.

Why should not both you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men determined on finding a common solution, and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or interested in it?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[1] *The following is the relevant passage which occurred in Jinnah Sahib's speech at the annual session of the Muslim League at Delhi, in April* 1943, *as then reported in the Press, inviting Gandhiji to write to him and challenging the Government to stop such a communication from Gandhiji:*

"No body would welcome it more than myself if Mr. Gandhi is even now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan. Let me tell you that it will be the greatest day both for the Hindus and the Muslims. If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr. Gandhi from writing direct to me? He is writing letters to the Viceroy. Why does he not write to me direct? What is the use of going to the Viceroy and leading deputations and carrying on correspondence? Who is to prevent Mr. Gandhi to-day? I cannot believe for a single moment—strong as this Government may be in this country—you may say anything you like against the Government—I cannot believe that they will have the daring to stop such a letter if it is sent to me. It will be a very serious thing, indeed, if such a thing is done by the Government. But I do not see evidence of any kind of change of policy on the part of Mr. Gandhi or the Hindu leadership."

THE GELDER INTERVIEW

"I shall work with the hope that my influence will always be felt to keep India peace-minded and so affect the world policy towards real peace and brotherhood among all without the distinction of race and colour."

Handing over to Press representatives two statements for publication on July 12, 1944, Gandhiji explained that they were two sets of notes prepared after discussion with an English journalist, Mr. Stuart Gelder of the "News Chronicle," London. One statement was intended for publication after the journalist had communicated his impressions of Gandhiji to the Viceroy in Delhi, and the other statement contained notes of the talks which Gandhiji gave to the journalist to discuss with anyone who cared to understand Gandhiji and how his mind was working.

The following is the write-up, the publication of which Gandhiji agreed to under certain circumstances. This write-up followed an interview between Gandhiji and a British journalist.

I saw Mahatma Gandhi on July 4, at Panchgani. I told him: "My editor is anxious to help in solving the political deadlock in India. I went to Delhi and I was disappointed. I hope you will not disappoint me." I asked him: "Supposing you saw Lord Wavell, how would you begin to talk? What would you say to him?"

He promptly replied that he would tell the Viceroy that he had sought the interview with a view to help and not to hinder the Allies, and it was to this end he had asked for permission to see the members of the Congress Working Committee. He said he felt he had no authority to act in the name of the Congress. According to the canons of *Satyagraha*, when a civil resister was imprisoned, the authority vested in him automatically came to an end. Hence, the need for him to see the members of the Working Committee.

I said: "The Viceroy might feel, as you swear by the August Resolution[1] and by the weapon of civil dis-

[1] See *Appendix*—V.

obedience, your meeting the Working Committee members may only result in their reinvesting you with authority to carry on civil disobedience in the name of the Congress, and the result will be that when you came out of the interview, you will hold the pistol on the Viceroy's head and say: 'Do this or I start civil disobedience.' That would make things worse than they are to-day."

Mahatma Gandhi replied: "At the back of that is an utter distrust of my profession that I am, and have always been, a friend of the British. Therefore, I can never use the weapon of civil disobedience during the War unless there was a very grave reason, as for instance, the thwarting of India's natural right to freedom."

My next question was: "Supposing the Working Committee is let out of jail to-morrow and the Government refuses to give India what they want, would you start civil disobedience?"

Mahatma Gandhi replied: "If the Working Committee came out, they would take stock of the situation and discuss things among themselves and with me. I can tell you this that I have no intention of offering civil disobedience to-day. I cannot take the country back to 1942. History can never be repeated. Even without the authority of the Congress if I wanted to do it, I could start civil disobedience to-day on the strength of my supposed influence with the masses. But I would be doing so merely to embarrass the British Government. This cannot be my object. But the Working Committee would not sit still while people are suffering.

"It is my conviction that we cannot improve the food situation and alleviate the sufferings of the people unless power and responsibility are transferred from British into Indian hands. Without such transfer, the attempt of Congressmen and others to alleviate the people's sufferings are most likely to lead to conflict with the Government."

I interrupted and said: "When things are as they are, I cannot believe that they will transfer authority now.

This Government will not concede the demand for independence while the War is on."

Mahatma Gandhi replied that there was a difference between what he would ask to-day and what was asked in 1942. To-day he would be satisfied with a National Government in full control of civil administration. It was not so in 1942. Such a Government would be composed of persons chosen by the elected members of the Central Assembly. This would mean declaration of independence of India, qualified as above during the War.

I thought it was a great improvement on the 1942 position. I asked him if the military would control the railways, ports, etc. Mahatma Gandhi replied that the National Government would let the military have all the facilities that the military might require. But the control would be that of the National Government. Ordinance rule would give place to normal administration by the National Government.

"Will the Viceroy be there?" I asked.

"Yes, but he will be like the King of England guided by responsible Ministers. Popular Government will be automatically restored in all the Provinces, so that both the Provincial and Central Governments will be responsible to the people of India. So far as military operations are concerned, the Viceroy and the Commander-in Chief will have complete control. But it must be possible for the National Government to offer advice and criticisms even in military matters. Thus the portfolio of Defence would be in the hands of the National Government which would be genuinely interested in the defence of the country and may render great assistance in the shaping of policies. The Allied forces would be allowed to carry on their operations on Indian soil. I realize that they cannot defeat Japan without that."

Mahatma Gandhi made it clear that the expenses of the Allied operations on Indian soil should not be borne by India.

"If a National Government is formed, would you advise the Congress to participate in it?" I asked.

Mahatma Gandhi replied in the affirmative.

"So it means that if a National Government is formed, the Congress will join and help the war-effort. What would be your position?" I asked.

"I am a lover of peace through and through. After independence was assured, I would probably cease to function as adviser to the Congress and, as an all-war resister, I would have to stand aside, but I shall not offer any resistance against the National Government or the Congress. My co-operation will be abstention from interfering with the even tenor of life in India. I shall work with the hope that my influence will always be felt to keep India peace-minded and so affect the world policy towards real peace and brotherhood among all without the distinction of race and colour."

"Supposing there is a conflict between the civil and military authorities, how would the dispute be settled? If, for example, civil authorities wanted to use the railway to carry 2,000 tons of food and the military authorities wanted it for carrying munitions, what would you advise?" I next asked.

Mahatma Gandhi replied: "As I said before, I would not have to advise on such matters. But supposing I had, I can conceive the necessity of allowing precedence to the military. But supposing the military wanted to blow off places or practise manœuvres in disregard of the life of the people, I would say: 'Hands off.'

"The thing is that with mutual trust such difficulties would not arise and if they did, they would be easily adjusted. If there is no trust, I cannot work. I cannot work for Allied victory without trust. If they trusted, a settlement would be easy to achieve. Freedom for India will bring hope to Asiatics and other exploited nations. To-day, there is no hope for the Negroes, but Indian freedom will fill them with hope."

Finally, I asked: "What about the Hindu-Muslim differences?"

Mahatma Gandhi replied if the British meant well, there would be no difficulties.

Mahatma Gandhi said in conclusion: "Most of us believe that whatever the Viceroy may wish personally, he has not the authority in the political sphere. Mr. Churchill does not want a settlement. He wants to crush me, if he has been correctly reported. He has never denied the report. The beauty of it for me, and the pity of it for him, is that no one can crush a *satyagrahi*, for he offers his body as a willing sacrifice and thus makes the spirit free."

Explanatory Statement

In the course of his explanatory statement, Gandhiji said that throughout his talks with the British journalist, he had emphasized the fact that he was speaking for himself and in no sense involving the Congress in what he said. He added :

"I do not know how far to-day I represent the views of the members of the Working Committee. And about the Hindu-Muslim formula,[1] it has nothing to do with these statements. I have not spoken as a Hindu. I have spoken as an Indian first and an Indian last. My Hinduism is my own—I personally think it embraces all faiths. Therefore, I have no authority to speak as a representative of the Hindus. That I respond to the mass mind and the masses know me instinctively is a fact which cannot be gainsaid, but I have not built my case upon it."

[1] See *Appendix*—VI.

MEANING OF GELDER INTERVIEW

> "I feel firmly that Jinnah Sahib does not block the way, but the British Government do not want a just settlement of the Indian claim for independence which is overdue, and they are using Jinnah Sahib as a cloak for denying freedom to India."

"If Jinnah Sahib does not accept my suggestion or if the powers that be do not, I would consider it most unfortunate. That would show that neither of them wants India to be really free at this juncture and give India a full share in winning the war for freedom and democracy. I live for a cause and if I perish it is for the cause," declared Gandhiji, in an informal chat, reiterating his faith in the destiny of a free India.

Gandhiji said that it must be the duty of all fair-minded people to break what he called "the diabolical conspiracy to stifle India's aspirations."

A reporter suggested that it might be that His Majesty's Government do not, for the duration of the War, entertain any idea for the transference of power and it was feared that Mr. Jinnah would not be agreeable to accept Gandhiji's suggestion because a National Government might, in his opinion, consolidate the position of the Hindus in the Centre.

Gandhiji explained: "I myself feel firmly that Jinnah Sahib does not block the way, but the British Government do not want a just settlement of the Indian claim for independence which is overdue, and they are using Jinnah Sahib as a cloak for denying freedom to India. I have uttered my warning in the talk I gave to Stuart Gelder."

"I have the firmest faith," he declared "that they may win the War in the trial of brute strength, because brute strength when applied to limitless finances will naturally be supreme, but it will be only a physical victory and lead to another world war. This is the outpouring of a lacerated heart."

August Resolution

Gandhiji said: "Some have said that I have admitted that the August Resolution has lapsed. Not only have I never said it, but on the contrary at the Maharashtra workers' meeting, I made it clear to the friends who had gathered around me at Poona, that no comma of that Resolution could be altered by anybody except those who passed it, namely the A.I.C.C. What I have said and what I reaffirm is that my authority, under the Resolution, had undoubtedly lapsed according to my view of the working of *satyagraha*.

"The premature publication of the interview to Gelder has led to some confusion in the minds of Congressmen. Let me make it clear that the lapsing of my authority has nothing to do with the normal activities of the Congress. What no one can do in the name of the Congress is mass civil disobedience which was never started and which, as I have said, I cannot, at the present moment, even in my personal capacity, start.

"The 'Quit India' Resolution, I hold to be absolutely innocuous. The Gelder interview notes now published are in no way in conflict with the 'Quit India' Resolution as I have interpreted it, and as the joint author of it I have every right to interpret it.

Civil Disobedience

"The question before me and before India is how to implement the Resolution at the present time, *i.e.*, nearly two years after the passing of the Resolution. The Gelder interview notes show the way how it can be done in a perfectly honourable manner. Those who approve of the stand I have taken up will naturally support it. People having difficulty are free to refer to me, but their approval of the stand taken by me must not be interpreted to mean suspension of the normal activities of the Congress and, if the Government interfere with those activities, the inherent right of individual civil disobedience is in no way suspended under the statement referred to by me.

"The statements constitute my individual personal effort to end the political deadlock.... They are more

addressed to the powers that be than to the people. If there is a hearty response, there will be no occasion for civil disobedience, even individually.

Cripps' Plan Different

Answering a question put by a reporter whether the Cripps' proposals[1] could be compared with his recent statement, Mahatma Gandhi said: "My proposal is wholly different. The Cripps proposals were unacceptable to me for the simple reason that they contemplated almost perpetual vivisection of India and would have created an effective barrier against Indian independence. I want to say this without the slightest disrespect to Sir Stafford Cripps. He still remains to me the same friend that he claimed to be when he was here. For me, friendships abide in spite of political differences.

"One fundamental element in my attitude is that I shall never be a party to the sale of rights of the people of the States for the sake of freedom of the people of British India. At the same time, I am no enemy of the Princes. I consider myself to be their friend, and if anybody cares to understand, I am quite prepared to suggest a solution at once honourable to them and to the people."

[1]See *Appendix*—III.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"My plan contemplates an immediate recognition of full independence for India as a whole, subject to limitations for the duration of the War to meet the requirements of the Allied operations."

The following replies by Gandhiji were given to questions addressed by the London office of the 'United Press of India' at Panchgani on July 15, 1944:

Q. Will you kindly explain the exact difference between the Cripps Plan and your own as revealed in the Gelder interview?

A. My plan contemplates an immediate recognition of full independence for India as a whole, subject to limitations for the duration of the War to meet the requirements of the Allied operations. The Cripps Plan, as I understood it, dealt more with the future than with the immediate arrangements. Moreover, in my opinion, the Cripps Plan meant dismemberment of India, the Indian States being set up as an all-extensive disintegrating factor. But if my plan is considered by British statesmen to be not very different from the Cripps Plan, it should be all the easier for them to accept it.

Q. What if Mr. Jinnah sticks to a plebiscite of Muslims only in the districts or provinces where the Muslims are in majority?

A. Neither Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah nor the Muslim League have pronounced their opinion on Rajaji's Formula.[1] I would deprecate anticipating them. Rajaji is with me. We have agreed for the sake of conserving my limited energy that he should deal with the questions arising from the Formula. For my part, I would appeal to the questioners, foreign or Indian, not to forestall the Muslim League.

Q. How do you propose to fix the ratio of the League and the Congress in the National Government?

[1] See *Appendix*—VI.

A. I must not be drawn into details. If the indication of my mind affords any satisfaction to the authorities, they should open the gates of the prison and let those who can speak with authority pronounce upon my proposal or at least let me confer with them. As it is, I do not know that I have not embarrassed them by my sharing my personal opinion with the public before first sharing it with them. The publication is premature and not of my seeking.

Q. Will you meet Mr. Jinnah personally ?

A. The question arises from ignorance of facts. I am always willing to meet Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah.

LETTER TO QAID-E-AZAM

"Do not regard me as an enemy of Islam or of Indian Muslims. I have always been a servant and friend to you and to mankind."

Jinnah Sahib addressing the Council of the All-India Muslim League at Lahore on July 30, 1944, disclosed the letter which he had received from Gandhiji inviting a personal discussion and his reply. The following is an English rendering of Gandhiji's letter to Jinnah Sahib in Gujarati dated 17th July, 1944. (Gandhiji had also appended an Urdu translation to the original Gujarati):

DILKUSHA (Panchgani): July 17, 1944.

BROTHER JINNAH,

There was a time when I was able to induce you to speak in the mother tongue. To-day, I venture to write to you in the mother tongue. I have already suggested a meeting between you and me in my invitation issued from jail. I have not yet written to you since my release. To-day, I am impelled to do so. Let us meet whenever you wish. Do not regard me as an enemy of Islam or of Indian Muslims. I have always been a servant and friend to you and to mankind. Do not disappoint me.

Your brother,
M. K. GANDHI

To the above, Jinnah Sahib replied as follows:

H. B. "Queen Elizabeth,"
SRINAGAR (Kashmir): July 24, 1944.

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I received your letter dated July 17 here on July 22 and I thank you for it.

I shall be glad to receive you at my house in Bombay on my return, which will probably be about the middle of August. By that time, I hope, that you will have recuperated your health fully and will be returning to

Bombay. I would like to say nothing more till we meet.

I am very pleased to read in the Press that you are making very good progress, and I hope that you will soon be all right.

Yours Sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

THE RAJAJI FORMULA

"Whilst I have said and repeat that the presence of a third party effectively prevents the solution, it was never meant to convey that I would make no attempt at an honourable solution even while the third party continued to dominate this land of ours."

In an interview to the Press given at Panchgani on July 30, 1944, Gandhiji emphasized that the British Government's rejection of his offer did not affect in any way the Formula for a communal settlement. Asked when he expected to meet Jinnah Sahib, he said:

I expect to meet the Qaid-e-Azam as soon as he wants me, of course, health permitting. The publication of the Formula is in pursuance of negotiations for a communal settlement. It is not an idle effort. It is conceived in all sincerity. It is unfortunate that the criticism that has been levelled against it, so far as I can see, has been conceived out of prejudice or careless study of the Formula. Nor is it an offer on the part of any party. It is a contribution from two life-servants of the nation towards the solution of the communal tangle which has hitherto defied solution. It is an open invitation to all parties to apply their minds to the solution. The Rajaji Formula is intended as a help to all lovers of the country. It is the best we could conceive, but it is open to amendment as it is open to rejection or acceptance. In a way, the rejection of my offer for the resolution of the political deadlock enables all parties to concentrate their attention on a communal settlement. Whilst I have said and repeat that the presence of a third party effectively prevents the solution, it was never meant to convey that I would make no attempt at an honourable solution even while the third party continued to dominate this land of ours. No one will be more pleased than I if we can pull through to a solution which satisfies all parties.

FURTHER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I do not believe in dying before my death....I always hope for the best and prepare for the worst."

The following is an account of an interview Gandhiji gave to the 'United Press of India' at Sevagram, on August 7, 1944:

Q. You said in Panchgani: "All my recent declarations are quite consistent with all my previous declarations on the communal problem." But, in the past, you had said: "Partition means a patent untruth....My whole soul rebels against the idea....To assent to such a doctrine is for me denial of God." (*Harijan*: April 14, 1940). "The partition proposal has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. It cannot come by honourable agreement." (*Harijan*: May 4, 1940). "I consider vivisection of India to be a sin...." (*May* 24, 1942). Would you kindly enlighten me how they are consistent? The Mahasabhaites seem to argue in the above style and hence clarification is sought.

A. Though I would avoid answering all questions on the subject before the forthcoming meeting between Qaid-e-Azam and me, I must not postpone answering yours. I know my present attitude has puzzled and pained many people. I have not revised the opinion quoted by you. At the same time that I made the statement you refer to, I was also a party to the self-determination resolution of the A.I.C.C.[1] I hold that the Rajaji Formula gives effect to that resolution. I would, however, urge critics not to mind my inconsistencies, so-called or real. Let them examine the question on merits and bless the effort if they can.

Q. What is your reaction to Mr. Jinnah's speech? If Mr. Jinnah does not accept your proposal or your talks with him end in failure, will you withdraw your support to Rajaji's proposals or will the proposals stand?

A. I do not believe in dying before my death. I do not approach the forthcoming visit with the expecta-

[1] See *Appendix*—IV.

tion of failure. I always hope for the best and prepare for the worst. I would, therefore, ask you not to anticipate failure. Ask me when the failure stares you and me in the face.

Q. What have you got to say to the Sikhs who have expressed apprehension in the All-Party Sikh Conference at Lahore that you will further surrender to the Muslim League?

A. My Sikh friends are unnecessarily perturbed. I can settle nothing for anybody but myself. The Congress resolution is a sacred trust and I have no doubt that it will be discharged fully. Brave people are never frightened by bogeys. Let the Sikh friends examine the proposal on merits. And if they find an evident flaw in it, I shall correct it and so, I am sure, will the Qaid-e-Azam if he is satisfied that there is a flaw.[1]

[1] Similar assurance was given by Gandhiji to Dr. Shayama Prasad Mookerjee, President of the Hindu Mahasabha. See *Appendix*—VIII.

THE CONJURER'S BASKET

"It is clear as crystal that the British Government do not propose to give up the power they possess over the four hundred millions, unless the latter develop strength enough to wrest it from them."

The following statement was issued by Gandhiji on August 18,1944, *upon the publication of the correspondence between him and the Viceroy.*[1] *It also dealt with his expected talks with Jinnah Sahib.*

The published correspondence shows that I left no stone unturned to conform to the Viceregal requirement. The final Government reply is a positive proof that the British Government have no intention to win public support. I do not confine myself to the Congress since its main demand has been backed by almost all political parties. So far as the technical winning of the War is concerned, they have evidently no need of such support. Moral support they seem to despise. Boiled down, the Viceroy's proposition means that unless all the main parties agree as to the constitution of the future, and there is agreement between the British Government and the main parties, there is to be no change in the constitutional position and the Government of India is to be carried on as at present. The names of parties given in the Government reply are illustrative only. I have no doubt that on due occasion more will be exhibited as from a conjurer's basket. And who knows how and when the British Government will agree to surrender control. It is as clear as crystal that the British Government do not propose to give up the power they possess over the four hundred millions, unless the latter develop strength enough to wrest it from them. I shall never lose hope that India will do so by purely moral means. The problem of food meanwhile remains unsolved. Only a National Government envisaged by me can provide a genuine solution.

[1] See *Appendix*—IX.

Any other will be a mirage. It is most unfortunate that at this critical juncture the Qaid-e-Azam has fallen ill and under medical advice he cannot see me till he is free from his illness. A proper heart agreement between us can induce a revision even of the firm refusal of the British Government as conveyed through his Excellency's letter. Let us all pray that the Qaid-e-Azam may be soon restored enough to see me and that God will so dominate our hearts as to lead us to a right solution. I would like to assure all parties to be affected by our solution that we will not come to any terms which might compromise or ignore a single interest. The Rajaji Formula is capable of being amended if it is found to contain flaws, as many Hindu and Sikh friends have suggested it does. No solution is likely to last unless it is on the face of it right and is acceptable to the people of India as a whole.

"Mass civil disobedience is conceived as an entirely effective substitute for a bloody war and is any day far superior to it. But just as wars do not take place for the sake of war, but only for a cause just or unjust, mass civil disobedience can take place only for a cause wholly just."

The following is a Press report of the interview which Peggy Durdin, correspondent of the American weeklies Time *and* Life, *had with Gandhiji towards the end of August* 1944, *shortly after the Viceroy's rejection of Gandhiji's proposals for the formation of a Provisional National Government:*

Q. Does the Viceroy's rejection of your offer in any way lessen the desirability of or urgency for a communal settlement now?

A. Not in the least. As I have already said in several interviews, the simultaneous publication of my offer to the Viceroy and the Rajaji Formula established a wholly unintended connection between the two. The rejection makes the urgency doubly urgent. This I say although I believe that past experience shows that so long as there is a third party dividing communities and interests, there is no adjustment possible. This has never meant for me that I should not strive for a settlement even before independence.

Q. From the point of view of non-violence, is it not preferable for a National Government to take office after, rather than during, the present War?

A. Not if a National Government comes into being even during the War by the spontaneous act of Great Britain or the Allies. For, then, the War itself will have changed its course and the peace to come will be wholly honourable and calculated to promote non-violence.

Q. Would not a strong group of nationalist ministers, Hindu and Muslim, responsible under the present constitution to the Viceroy rather than to the Legislature in point of fact, nullify the Viceregal veto? Would not a common front presented by strong nationalist leaders make acceptance of their programme and plans inevitable?"

A. No such manipulation can possibly electrify the whole nation. Such an experiment is doomed to failure *ab initio.* It would lack trust on the part of the British Government in the people of India.

Q. I am not clear on your attitude towards mass civil disobedience. Am I right in thinking that you would consider its use justified if your appeals to the Viceroy and the talks with Mr. Jinnah fail?

A. Mass civil disobedience can only take place if other efforts to achieve the object aimed at fail. Here the object is independence. Appeal to the Viceroy was for a settlement. The appeal having failed, the case for civil disobedience is complete. Successful negotiations with the Qaid-e-Azam need not enter into here but, as I have already publicly stated, I may not offer civil disobedience at the present moment. Mass civil disobedience is conceived as an entirely effective substitute for a bloody war and is any day far superior to it. But just as wars do not take place just for the sake of war, but only for a cause just or unjust, mass civil disobedience can take place only for a cause wholly just. If I have understood your question correctly, this answer ought to set at rest all your doubts.

Q. Would you consider courting re-arrest if your proposals or those of yourself and Mr. Jinnah are not accepted?

A. I really do not know future plans. You will believe me when I say that they are in God's hands.

Q. Non-violence may be relative, not absolute. Some participation for the purpose of producing real and lasting peace, may be unavoidable and even desirable. Is this a fair statement of the position?

A. It is a fair statement. I cannot challenge it merely because it is likely to lead to dangerous abuse from the non-violent stand-point. Pure, unmixed non-violence is as impossible as Euclid's line.

Q. I understand your answer to mean that mass civil disobedience presents no solution of the present deadlock?

A. You are right.

'IN GOD'S GOOD HANDS'

"Our goal is the attainment of independence for the whole of India. It is for that we pray and are pledged to lay down our lives."

At a prayer gathering at Bombay on Sept. 11, 1944, referring to his meeting with Jinnah Sahib, Gandhiji said he knew how eager they must be to be acquainted with the progress of the talks. It was a natural eagerness on their part which he would like to satisfy, as far as possible, consistently with the interest of the cause which they all shared with him in common.

All that he could say at the present stage was that Jinnah Sahib and he had met as old friends on Saturday (September 9), and again that day (Monday). He added that they would be meeting again the next day from 10-30 a. m. to 1 p. m. and from 5-30 to 7 p. m. This would leave them a little time to attend to other work and to digest the substance of the talks. They fully realized what a heavy responsibility rested on their shoulders. They knew that millions were watching the talks and were anxious that a settlment should be arrived at which would subserve the interests not of any particular group or community, but of the whole of India. "Our goal is the attainment of independence for the whole of India. It is for that we pray and are pledged to lay down our lives", said Gandhiji. Jinnah Sahib and he had only God between them as witness. Gandhiji proceeded: "My constant prayer these days is that He may so guide my speech that not a word might escape my lips so as to hurt the feelings of Jinnah Sahib or damage the cause that is dear to us both. I am sure the same is the case with Jinnah Sahib. He told me to-day: 'If we part without coming to an agreement, we shall proclaim bankruptcy of wisdom on our part.' What is more, the hopes of millions of our countrymen will be dashed to pieces. To-day, the eyes of all the oppressed people of the world are on us. We, therefore, are fully alive to our responsibility and are straining every nerve

to come to a settlement. But we realize that ultimately the result lies in God's good hands. You should, therefore, all pray that He may guide us and give us wisdom to serve the cause of India."

In conclusion, Gandhiji appealed to the Press to put a curb on their inventiveness and not to give free rein to their imagination. Since neither he nor Jinnah Sahib were opening their lips to anybody, there could be no question of leakage.

ON MEETING WITH JINNAH

"Our meeting would have no meaning if we did not meet with hope.... Pray that the spirit of God may enter our hearts and guide us to arrive at a settlement which will be in the interests of the whole country."

Addressing people in Hindustani gathered at Rungta House, Malabar Hill, Bombay, for evening prayers on September 19, 1944, *Gandhiji said:*

To-morrow is Idd. I do not know how many Muslims attend this prayer. But I know of at least one here. My advice to you is that if you wish to achieve the freedom of India in the shortest possible time, you should cultivate the friendship of your Muslim brothers. The common people can certainly do this much. There are in this city Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. If all the people of Bombay become united, do you not think that we can bring our freedom much nearer?

Ever since my return from abroad, I have been crying myself hoarse that if we become one, *Swaraj* is in our hands. We have been looking on with indifference, but if we give up this attitude and create mutual trust, we can derive immense benefit. This is a great thing. And if we can achieve this, we shall go a long way towards our goal.

Jinnah Sahib and I—two brothers—have been meeting every day, except on special occasions like Idd day or my day of silence. I cannot reveal to you everything about the talks. But if all of you come together in brotherly affection, and with open hearts pray for our success, you will be helping us a great deal indeed. Sometimes, you find all kinds of prophecies. God is with us. We are not being led by prophecies, but by the spirit of God. The papers publish all kinds of forecasts, and messages have been sent abroad. It will be wrong to believe them. We have been meeting for the last several days and we have not been meeting for nothing. Nor are we meeting to quarrel. We have been sitting day after day because

we see some hope. So, do not give up hope. If hope is frustrated, I will let you know.

We have been meeting with a certain desire in our hearts. Our meeting would have no meaning if we did not meet with hope. So my request to all of you is that you should pray that the spirit of God may enter our hearts and guide us to arrive at a settlement, which will be in the interests of the whole country.

GANDHI-JINNAH CORRESPONDENCE

"My mission has been Hindu-Muslim unity which I want for its own sake, but which is not to be achieved without the foreign ruling Power being ousted. Hence, the first condition of the exercise of the right of self-determination is achieving Independence by the joint action of all the parties and groups composing India. If such joint action is unfortunately impossible, then, too, I must fight with the assistance of such elements as can be brought together."

Fourteen interviews took place between Gandhiji and Jinnah Sahib at Bombay, the first on September 9, *and the last on September* 27, 1944. *August* 17 *was the date originally fixed for the meeting, which had to be postponed owing to Jinnah Sahib's illness. Simultaneously with the conversations, which were described as extremely cordial and friendly, they also exchanged letters. The following is the text of the correspondence, which was released to the Press on the* 27*th September*, 1944:

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

September 10, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

With reference to our talk yesterday (September 9), I understood from you that you had come to discuss the Hindu-Muslim settlement with me in your individual capacity, and not in any representative character or capacity, on behalf of the Hindus or the Congress; nor had you any authority to do so. I naturally pointed out to you that there must be some one on the other side with authority holding a representative status with whom I can negotiate and, if possible, come to settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question, and that for the position you had adopted there was no precedent, and that this raises great difficulties in my way.

As you know, I can only speak on behalf of Muslim India and the All-India Muslim League, as the President of the organization which I represent, and as such I am subject to and governed by its constitution, rules and

regulations. I think you realize and will admit that a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question is the foremost and major hurdle, and unless the representatives of these two nations put their heads together, how is one to make any headway with it?

Nevertheless, I explained to you the Lahore Resolution of March, 1940,[1] and tried to persuade you to accept the basic and fundamental principles embodied in it, but you not only refused to consider it but emphasized your opposition to the basis indicated in that resolution, and remarked that there was "an ocean between you and me," and when I asked you what is then the alternative you suggest, you put forward a Formula of Mr. Rajagopalachari approved by you.[2] We discussed it, and as various matters were vague and nebulous, and some required clarification, I wanted to have a clear idea of what it really meant and what were its implications, and asked you for explanations and clarification regarding the proposals embodied in that Formula.

After some discussion, you requested me to formulate in writing my points that I thought required or called for explanation and clarification, and to communicate with you and that you would reply in writing before our next meeting on Monday, September 11, at 5-30 p. m. I am, therefore, submitting to you the following points which require clarification:

(1) With regard to the Preamble: In what capacity will you be a consenting party if any agreement is reached between you and me?

(2) Clause 1: With regard to "the constitution for a Free India" referred to in this clause, I would like to know first, what constitution do you refer to, who will frame it and when will it come into being?

Next, it is stated in the Formula that "the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence." Does it mean the Congress demand for Independence

[1] See *Appendix*—II.
[2] See *Appendix*—VI.

as formulated in the August Resolution of 1942 by the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay or, if not, what is the significance of this term, for you know the Muslim League has made it clear not only by its resolutions but by its creed, which is embodied in its constitution, that we stand for freedom and independence of the whole of this sub-continent, and that applies to Pakistan and Hindustan.

Next, it is stated that the Muslim League "will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a Provisional Interim Government for the transitional period," I would like to know the basis or the lines on which such a Government is to be set up or constituted. If you have a complete and definite scheme, please let me have it.

(3) Clause 2: Who will appoint the Commission referred to in this clause and who will give effect to their findings? What is the meaning of "absolute majority" referred to in it? Will the contemplated plebiscite be taken district-wise or, if not, on what basis? Who will determine and decide whether such a plebiscite should be based on adult franchise or other practicable franchise? Who will give effect to the decision or verdict of the above-mentioned plebiscite. Would only the districts on the border, which are taken out from the boundaries of the present provinces by delimitation, be entitled to choose to join either State, or would also those outside the present boundaries have the right to choose to join either State?

(4) Clause 3: Who are meant by "all parties" in this clause?

(5) Clause 4: I would like to know between whom and through what machinery and agency will the "mutual agreements" referred to in this clause be entered into? What is meant by "safeguarding Defence, Commerce and Communications and for other essential purposes"? Safeguarding against whom?

(6) Clause 6: "These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India." I would like to know to whom is this power to be transferred, through

what machinery and agency, and when?

These are some of the important points that occur to me for the moment, which require explanation and clarification, and I hope that you will let me have full details about the various points that I have raised, in order that I may be be better able to understand and judge your proposals before I can deal with them satisfactorily.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

II

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 11, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

I received your letter yesterday at 3-30 p. m. I was in the midst of appointments. I hasten to reply at the earliest opportunity.

I have said in my letter to you, it is implied in the Rajaji Formula and I have stated publicy that I have approached you as an individual. My life mission has been Hindu-Muslim unity which I want for its own sake, but which is not to be achieved without the foreign ruling Power being ousted. Hence, the first condition of the exercise of the right of self-determination is achieving Independence by the joint action of all the parties and groups composing India. If such joint action is unfortunately impossible, then too, I must fight with the assistance of such elements as can be brought together.

I am glad, therefore, that you did not break off our talks when I refused to assume or accept representative capacity. Of course, I am pledged to use all the influence I may have with the Congress to ratify my agreement with you. May I remind you that the Rajaji Formula was designed in the first instance for your acceptance and submission thereafter to the League?

It is true that I said an ocean separated you and me in outlook. But that had no reference to the Lahore Resolution of the League. The Lahore Resolution is

indefinite. Rajaji has taken from it the substance and given it a shape.

Now, for the points raised by you.

1. I have already answered this in the foregoing.

2. The constitution will be framed by the Provisional Government contemplated in the Formula or an authority specially set up by it after the British Power is withdrawn. The Independence contemplated is of the whole of India as it stands. The basis for the formation of the Provisional Interim Government will have to be agreed to between the League and the Congress.

3. The Commission will be appointed by the Provisional Government. 'Absolute majority' means a clear majority over non-Muslim elements as in Sind, Baluchistan or the Frontier Province. The form of plebiscite and the franchise must be a matter for discussion.

4. "All parties" means parties interested.

5. "Mutual agreement" means agreement between contracting parties. "Safeguarding Defence, etc." means for me a Central or Joint Board of Control. "Safeguarding" means safeguarding against all who may put the common interest in jeopardy.

6. The power is to be transferred to the nation, that is, to the Provisional Government. The Formula contemplates peaceful transfer by the British Government So far as I am concerned, I would like the transfer to take place as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

III

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

September 11, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I received your letter of September 11 at 5 p. m. to-day. I note that you have approached me as an individual, and I have already expressed my views about it. Please do not take it that I acquiesce in the position that

you have adopted, for which there is no precedent. Nevertheless, I proceeded to discuss matters with you naturally because I am anxious to convert you to my point of view, if possible. I urged on you that the only solution of India's problem is to accept the division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan, as briefly laid down in the Lahore Resolution of March 1940, and proceed to settle the details forthwith. You say the Lahore Resolution is indefinite. You never asked me for any clarification or explanation of the terms of the Resolution, but you really indicated your emphatic opposition to the very basis and the fundamental principles embodied in it. I would, therefore, like to know in what way or respect the Lahore Resolution is indefinite. I cannot agree that Rajaji has taken from it its substance and given it shape. On the contrary, he has not only put it out of shape but mutilated it, as I explained in my speech which I delivered at the meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League at Lahore on July 30, 1944.

You say: "the first condition of the exercise of the right of self-determination is achieving Independence by the joint action of all the parties and groups composing India. If such joint action is unfortunately impossible, then, too, I must fight with the assistance of such elements as can be brought together." This, in my opinion, is, as I have repeatedly said, putting the cart before the horse, and is generally opposed to the policy and declarations of All-India Muslim League, and you are only holding on firmly to the August Resolution of 1942. In order to achieve the freedom and independence of the people of India, it is essential, in the first instance, that there should be a Hindu-Muslim settlement.

Of course, I am thankful to you when you say that you are pledged to use all the influence that you have with the Congress to ratify your agreement with me, but that is not enough in my judgment, although it will be a very valuable help to me.

I once more ask you please to let me know what is your conception of the basis for the formation of a Pro-

visional Interim Government. No doubt, it will be subject to agreement between the League and the Congress, but I think in fairness you should at least give me some rough idea or lines of your conception, for you must have thought it out by now, and I would like to know what are your proposals or scheme for the formation of a Provisional Interim Government, which can give me some clear picture to understand it.

You have omitted to answer my question as to who will give effect to the findings of the Commission, and also it is not clear to me what you mean by absolute majority, when you say it means "a clear majority over non-Muslim elements as in Sind, Baluchistan or the Frontier Province." You have not even replied to my question as to who will decide the form of the plebiscite and the franchise contemplated by the Formula.

The answer to the fourth point does not carry any clear idea when you say "all parties" means "parties interested."

You say: " 'mutual agreement' means 'agreement between contracting parties.' " Who are the contracting parties once a Provisional Interim Government is established of your conception? Who will appoint the Central or Joint Board of Control, which will safeguard Defence, etc., and on what principle, through what machinery and agency, and subject to whose control and orders will such a Central or Joint Board be?

You say: "The power is to be transferred to the nation, that is to the Provisional Government." That is all the greater reason why I would like to know full details of the Provisional Government as contemplated by you and of your conception.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. Jinnah

IV

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

September 13, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

When you arrived here on the morning of September

12 to resume our talks, you were good enough to inform me that you had not had time to attend to my letter of September 11, which reached you the same day at 10-30 p. m. We met again to-day without having received your reply, and I am still waiting for it. Please, therefore, let me have your reply as soon as possible with regard to the various points mentioned in my letter to you of September 11.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

V

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 14, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

I have your letter of the 13th instant. I understood from our talks that you were in no hurry for my answer. I was, therefore, taking the matter in a leisurely fashion, even hoping that as our talks proceeded and as cordiality increased, mutual clarification would come of itself and that we would only have to record our final agreement. But I understand and appreciate the other view-point. We should take nothing for granted. I should clarify your difficulties in understanding the Rajaji Formula and you should do likewise regarding yours, *i.e.*, the Muslim League Lahore Resolution of 1940.

With reference to the Lahore Resolution, as agreed between us, I shall deal with it in a separate letter.

Perhaps, at the end of our discussion, we shall discover that Rajaji not only has not put the Lahore Resolution out of shape and mutilated it, but has given it substance and form. Indeed, in view of your dislike of the Rajaji Formula, I have, at any rate for the moment, put it out of my mind and I am now concentrating on the Lahore Resolution in the hope of finding a ground for mutual agreement. So much for the first paragraph of your letter.

As to the second, I do hold that unless we oust the third party, we shall not be able to live at peace with one another. That does not mean that I may not make an effort to find ways and means of establishing a living peace between us.

You ask for my conception of the basis for a Provisional Interim Government. I would have told you if I had any scheme in mind. I imagine that if we two can agree, it would be for us to consult the other parties. I can say this, that any Provisional Government to inspire confidence at the present moment must represent all parties. When that moment arrives, I shall have been replaced by some authoritative person, though you will have me always at your beck and call when you have converted me, or I you, or by mutual conversion we have become one mind functioning through two bodies.

As to the third point, the Provisional Government being the appointing authority, will give effect to the findings of the Commission. This, I thought, was implied in my previous answer.

Rajaji tells me that 'absolute majority' is used in his Formula in the same sense as it is used in ordinary legal parlance wherever more than two groups are dealt with. I cling to my own answer. But you will, perhaps, suggest a third meaning and persuade me to accept it.

The form of the plebiscite and franchise must be left to be decided by the Provisional Interim Government, unless we decide it now. I should say it should be by adult suffrage of all the inhabitants of the Pakistan area.

As to fourth, "all parties" means you and I and every one else holding views on the question at issue will, and should, seek by peaceful persuasion to influence public opinion as is done where democracy functions, wholly or in part.

As to fifth, supposing that the result of the plebiscite is in favour of partition, the Provisional Government will draft the treaty and agreements as regards the administration of matters of common interest, but the same has

to be confirmed and ratified by the Governments of the two States. The machinery required for the settlement and administration of matters of common interest will, in the first instance, be planned by the Interim Government, but subsequently will be a matter for settlement between the two Governments acting through the agencies appointed by each for that purpose.

As to sixth, I hope the foregoing makes superfluous any further reply.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

VI

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

September 14, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I received your letter of September 14, at 4-45 p. m. to-day in reply to my letter of September 11 (and not of September 13, as you state, which seems to be a mistake), and I thank you for it.

Please let me have, as soon as you can, your promised letter indicating in what way or respect the Lahore Resolution is 'indefinite.'

With regard to the provision in the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula that "the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence", I asked you in my letter dated September 10, "Does it mean the Congress demand for Independence as formulated in the August 1942 Resolution by the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay or, if not, what is the significance of this term." To this you replied by your letter of September 11, "the Independence contemplated is of the whole of India as it stands." Hence, I again ask, does it mean on the basis of a united India? I find that you have not clarified this point satisfactorily.

As regards the next part of this clause, the Formula proceeds to lay down that "the Muslim League will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of the Provisional Interim Government for the transitional

period." I requested you by my letter of September 10 to let me know "the basis or the lines by which such a Government is to be set up or constituted. If you have a complete and definite scheme, please let me have it." To this you replied by your letter of September 11 under reply, that "the basis for the formation of the Provisional Interim Government will have to be agreed to between the League and the Congress." But that is not meeting my request for clarification or giving me at least the outlines of such a Government, and that is what I have been asking for. I hope that you do appreciate my point when I am requesting you to let me have rough outlines of the proposed Provisional Interim Government according to the Formula, so that I may have some idea.

Of course, I can quite understand that such a Provisional Interim Government will represent all parties and would be of a character that will inspire confidence at the present moment of all the parties. I can quite understand that when the moment arrives certain things may follow, but before we can deal with this Formula in a satisfactory manner, I repeat again that, as it is your formula, you should give me a rough idea of the Provisional Interim Government that you contemplate and of your conception.

What I would like to know would be: What will be the powers of such a Provisional Interim Government, how it will be formed, to whom it will be responsible, and what its composition will be, etc. You, being the sponsor of this Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, should give me some rough idea and picture of it, so that I may understand what this part of the Formula means.

In your letter of September 14, in reply to my letter of September 11, you inform me that you would have told me if you had any scheme in mind. "I imagine that if we two can agree it would be for us to consult the other parties," but that is just the point. Unless I have some outlines or scheme, however rough, from you, what are we to discuss in order to reach any agreement?

As regards the other matters which you have further

explained, I have noted the explanation, and I do not think I need press you further, although some of them are not quite satisfactory.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

VII

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 15, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

This is in terms of our talk of Wednesday, September 13.

For the moment, I have shunted the Rajaji Formula and, with your assistance, am applying my mind very seriously to the famous Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League.

You must admit that the Resolution itself makes no reference to the "two-nations" theory. In the course of our discussions you have passionately pleaded that India contains two nations, *i.e.*, Hindus and Muslims, and that the latter have their homelands in India, as the former have theirs.

The more our argument progresses, the more alarming your picture appears to me. It would be alluring if it were true. But my fear is growing that it is wholly unreal. I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendants claiming to be a nation apart from the parent stock. If India was one nation before the advent of Islam, it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a very large body of her children.

You do not claim to be a separate nation by right of conquest, but by reason of acceptance of Islam. Will the two nations become one if the whole of India accepted Islam? Will Bengalis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamilians, Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, etc., cease to have their special characteristics if all of them became converts to Islam? These have all become one politically because they are subject to one foreign control. They are trying today

to throw off that subjection. You seem to have introduced a new test of nationhood. If I accept it, I would have to subscribe to many more claims and face an insoluble problem.

The only real, though lawful, test of our nationhood arises out of our common political subjection. If you and I throw off this subjection by our combined effort, we shall be born a politically free nation out of our travail. If, by then, we have not learnt to prize our freedom, we may quarrel among ourselves and, for want of a common master holding us together in his iron grip, seek to split up into small groups or nationalities. There will be nothing to prevent us from descending to that level and we shall not have to go in search of a master. There are many claimants to the throne that never remains vacant.

With this background, I shall present you with my difficulty in accepting your resolution :

(1) Pakistan is not in the Resolution. Does it bear the original meaning the Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan out of which the name was mnemonically formed? If not, what is it?

(2) Is the goal of Pakistan pan-Islam?

(3) What is it that distinguishes an Indian Muslim from every other Indian, if not his religion? Is he different from a Turk or an Arab?

(4) What is the connotation of the word "Muslims" in the Resolution under discussion? Does it mean the Muslims of the India of geography or of the Pakistan to be?

(5) Is the Resolution addressed to Muslims by way of education, or to the inhabitants of the whole of India by way of appeal, or to the foreign ruler as an ultimatum?

(6) Are the constituents in the two zones to constitute "independent States," an undefined number in each zone?

(7) Is the demarcation to take place during the pendency of British rule?

(8) If the answer to the last question is in the affirmative, the proposal must be accepted first by Britain and then

imposed upon India, not evolved from within by the free will of the people of India ! ! !

(9) Have you examined the position and satisfied yourself that these "independent States" will be materially and otherwise benefited by being split up into fragments ?

(10) Please satisfy me that these independent sovereign States will not become a collection of poor States, a menace to themselves and to the rest of India.

(11) Pray show me by facts and figures or otherwise how independence and welfare of India as a whole can be brought about by the acceptance of the Resolution ?

(12) How are Muslims under the Princes to be disposed of as a result of this scheme ?

(13) What is your definition of "minorities"?

(14) Will you please define the "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards" for minorities referred to in the second part of the Resolution ?

(15) Do you not see that the Lahore Resolution contains only a bare statement of the objective and does not give any idea as to the means to be adopted for the execution of the idea and the concrete corollaries thereof ?

For instance:

(*a*) Are the people in the regions falling under the plan to have any voice in the matter of separation, and, if so, how is it to be ascertained ?

(*b*) What is the provision for Defence and similar matters of common concern contemplated in the Lahore Resolution?

(*c*) There are many groups of Muslims who have continuously expressed dissent from the policy of the League. While I am prepared to accept the pre-ponderating influence and position of the League and have approached you for that very reason, is it not our joint duty to remove their doubts and carry them with us by making them feel that they and their supporters have not been practically disfranchised ?

(*d*) Does this not lead again to placing the Resolution of the League before the people of zones concerned as a whole for acceptance ?

As I write this letter and imagine the working of the Resolution in practice, I see nothing but ruin for the whole of India. Believe me, I approach you as a seeker. Though I represent nobody but myself, I aspire to represent all the inhabitants of India. For, I realize in my own person their misery and degradation which is their common lot irrespective of class, caste or creed. I know that you have acquired a unique hold on the Muslim masses. I want you to use your influence for their total welfare, which must include the rest.

In this hastily written letter I have only given an inkling of my difficulty.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

VIII

Gandhiji To Jinnah Sahib

September 15, 1944.

Dear Qaid-e-Azam,

I have yours of September 14, received at 9-40 a. m. I woke up at 3 a. m. to-day to finish my promised letter on the Lahore Resolution. There is no mistake about the date, for I wrote in answer to your reminder of September 13.

Independence does mean as envisaged in the A.I.C.C. Resolution of 1942. But it cannot be on the basis of a united India. If we come to settlement it would be on the basis of that settlement, assuming of course that it secures general acceptance in the country. The process will be somewhat like this. We reach by joint effort independence for India as it stands. India, become free, will proceed to demarcation, plebiscite and partition if the people concerned vote for partition. All this is implied in the Rajaji Formula.

As to the Provisional Interim Government, I am afraid I cannot carry my answer any further than I have done. Though I have no scheme for such a Government, if you have one in connection with the Lahore Resolution,

which also I presume requires an Interim Government, we can discuss it.

The Formula was framed by Rajaji in good faith. I accepted it in equal good faith. The hope was that you would look at it with favour. We still think it to be the best in the circumstances. You and I have to put flesh on it, if we can. I have explained the process we have to go through. You have no objection to it. Perhaps, you want to know how I would form the Provisional Government if I was invited to form it. If I was in that unenviable position, I could see all the claimants and endeavour to satisfy them. My co-operation will be available in that task.

I can give you full satisfaction about your inquiry, "What I would like to know would be: what will be the powers of such a Provisional Interim Government, how will it be formed, to whom will it be responsible?" The Provisional Interim Government will be responsible to the elected members of the present Assembly or a newly elected one. It will have all the powers less that of the Commander-in-Chief during the War, and full powers thereafter. It will be the authority to give effect to the agreement that may be arrived at between the League and the Congress and ratified by the other parties.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

IX

JINNAH SAHIB TO GANDHIJI

September 17, 1944.

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I have your letter of September 15, and I thank you for it. I note that you have for the moment shunted "the Rajaji" Formula and are applying your mind very seriously to the Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League. It is my duty to explain the Lahore Resolution to you to-day and persuade you to accept it, even though you are talking to me, as you have often made it clear, in your individual capacity. I have successfully converted

non-Muslim Indians in no small number, and also a large body of foreigners, and if I can convert you, exercising as you do tremendous influence over Hindu India, it will be no small assistance to me, although we are not proceeding on the footing that you are carrying on these talks in your representative character or capacity, and my difficulties remain until you are vested with a representative status and authority in order to negotiate and reach an agreement with you.

You have stated in your letter dated September 11, that the Lahore Resolution is "indefinite." I, therefore, naturally asked you please to let me know in what way or respect the Lahore Resolution is indefinite. And now I have received your letter of September 15 under reply.

The third paragraph of your letter is not seeking clarification but is a disquisition and expression of your views on the point whether the Mussalmans are a nation. This matter can hardly be discussed by means of correspondence. There is a great deal of discussion and literature on this point which is available, and it is for you to judge finally, when you have studied this question thoroughly, whether the Mussalmans and Hindus are not two major nations in this sub-continent. For the moment, I would refer you to two publications, although there are many more,—Dr. Ambedkar's book and "M.R.T.'s" *Nationalism in Conflict in India*. We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of a hundred million, and, what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions—in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation. Now, I shall reply to your various points:

(1) Yes, the word "Pakistan" is not mentioned in the Resolution, and it does not bear the original meaning.

The word has now become synonymous with the Lahore Resolution.

(2) This point does not arise, but still I reply that the question is mere bogey.

(3) This point is covered by my answer that the Mussalmans of India are a nation. As to the last part of your query, it is hardly relevant to the matter of clarification of the Resolution.

(4) Surely, you know what the word "Muslims" means.

(5) This point does not arise by way of clarification of the text of the Lahore Resolution.

(6) No. They will form units of Pakistan.

(7) As soon as the basis and the principles embodied in the Lahore Resolution are accepted, the question of demarcation will have to be taken up immediately.

(8) In view of my reply to (7), your question (8) has been answered.

(9) Does not relate to clarification.

(10) My answer to (9) covers this point.

(11) Does not arise out of the clarification of the Resolution. Surely, this is not asking for clarification of the Resolution. I have in numerous speeches of mine and the Muslim League in its resolutions have pointed out that this is the only solution of India's problem and the road to achieve freedom and independence of the peoples of India.

(12) "Muslims under the Princes": The Lahore Resolution is only confined to British India. This question does not arise out of the clarification of the Resolution.

(13) The definition of "minorities": You yourself have often said "minorities" means "accepted minorities."

(14) The adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards for minorities, referred to in the Resolution, are a matter for negotiation and settlement with the minorities in the respective States, *viz.*, Pakistan and Hindustan.

(15) It does give basic principles and when they are accepted, then the details will have to be worked out by the contracting parties.

(*a*) Does not arise by way of clarification.

(*b*) Does not arise by way of clarification.

(*c*) The Muslim League is the only authoritative and representative organization of Muslim India.

(*d*) No: see answer (*c*).

As regards your final paragraph, before receiving clarifications from me, you have already passed your judgment and condemned the Lahore Resolution when you say: "As I write this letter and imagine the working of the Resolution in practice, I see nothing but ruin for the whole of India." I understand that you have made clear to me that you represent nobody but yourself, and I am trying to persuade you and to convert you that this is the road which will lead us to the achievement of freedom and independence not only of the two major nations, Hindus and Muslims, but of the rest of the peoples of India, but when you proceed to say that you aspire to represent all the inhabitants of India, I regret I cannot accept that statement of yours.

It is quite clear that you represent nobody else but the Hindus, and as long as you do not realize your true position and the realities, it is very difficult for me to argue with you, and it becomes still more difficult to persuade you, and hope to convert you to the realities and the actual conditions prevailing in India to-day. I am pleading before you in the hope of converting you, as I have done with many others successfully.

As I have said before, you are a great man and you exercise enormous influence over the Hindus, particularly the masses, and by accepting the road that I am pointing out to you, you are not prejudicing or harming the interests of the Hindus or of the minorities. On the contrary, Hindus will be the greatest gainers. I am convinced that true welfare not only of the Muslims but the rest of India lies in the division of India as proposed by the Lahore Resolution. It is for you to consider whether it is not your policy and programme in which you have persisted which has been the principal factor of the "ruin of whole of India" and of the misery and degradation of the people to which you refer and which I deplore no less than

anyone else. And it is for that very reason I am pleading before you all these days, although you insist that you are having talks with me only in your individual capacity, in the hope that you may yet revise your policy and programme.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

X

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 19, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

Many thanks for yours of 17th inst.

I am sorry to have to say that your answers, omitting 1, 2 and 6, do not give satisfaction.

It may be that all my questions do not arise from the view of mere clarification of the Lahore Resolution. But I contend that they are very relevant from the stand-point of a seeker that I am. You cannot expect anyone to agree to, or shoulder the burden of the claim contained in the Lahore Resolution without, for instance, answering my question 15 (*a*) and 15 (*b*) which you brush aside as not arising by way of clarification.

Dr. Ambedkar's thesis, while it is ably written, has carried no conviction to me. The other book mentioned by you, I am sorry to say, I have not seen.

Why can you not accept my statement that I aspire to represent all the sections that compose the people of India? Do you not aspire? Should not every Indian? That the aspiration may never be realized is beside the point.

I am beholden to you, in spite of your opinion about me, for having patience with me; I hope you will never lose it but will persevere in your effort to convert me. I ask you to take me with my strong views and even prejudices, if I am guilty of any.

As to your verdict on my policy and programme, we must agree to differ. For, I am wholly unrepentant. My

purpose is, as a lover of communal unity, to place my services at your disposal.

I hope you do not expect me to accept the Lahore Resolution without understanding its implications. If your letter is the final word, there is little hope. Can we not agree to differ on the question of "two nations" and yet solve the problem on the basis of self-determination? It is this basis that has brought me to you. If the regions holding Muslim majorities have to be separated according to the Lahore Resolution, the grave step of separation should be specifically placed before and approved by the people in that area.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

XI

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

September 21, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am in receipt of your letter of September 19 and I have already given you my answers to all your questions relating to clarification of the Lahore Resolution or any part of it, and I am glad that you admit when you say it may be that "all my questions do not arise from the view of mere clarification of the Lahore Resolution," but you particularly emphasize your points 15 (*a*) and 15 (*b*).

I regret to say it has no relation to the context of the Resolution or any part thereof. You have brought so many matters into our correspondence which are entirely outside the matter requiring clarification, so I have perforce to deal with them. Let me first deal with your letter of September 11.

You say: "My life-mission has been Hindu-Muslim unity which I want for its own sake but which is not to be achieved without the foreign ruling Power being ousted. Hence, the first condition of the exercise of the right of self-determination is achieving of Independence

by the joint action of all the parties and groups composing India. If such joint action is unfortunately impossible, then, too, I must fight with the assistance of such elements as can be brought together."

The gist of your letters up to date is that you are wedded to this policy and will pursue it. In your next letter of September 14, while you were good enough to furnish me with the clarification of the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, you were pleased to observe: "I have, at any rate for the moment, put it out of my mind and I am now concentrating on the Lahore Resolution in the hope of finding a ground for mutual agreement."

In your letter of September 15, you say: "Independence does mean as envisaged in the A.I.C.C. Resolution of 1942." It is, therefore, clear that you are not prepared to revise your policy and that you adhere firmly to your policy and programme which you have persisted in and which culminated in your demand, final policy, programme, and the method and sanction for enforcing it by resorting to mass civil disobedience in terms of the 8th August, 1942 Resolution, and you have made it more clear again by stating in your letter of September 19 as follows: "As to your verdict on my policy and programme, we must agree to differ, for, I am wholly unrepentant." You know that the August 1942 Resolution is inimical to the ideals and demands of Muslim India.

Then, again, in the course of our discussion when I asked you for clarification of the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, you were pleased to say, by your letter of September 15, as follows: "For the moment I have shunted the Rajaji Formula and, with your assistance, am applying my mind very seriously to the famous Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League." We discussed it in its various aspects, as you told me you were open to be persuaded and converted to our point of view. I discussed the Resolution at great length with you, and explained everything you wanted to understand, even though you have emphasized more than once that you are having these talks with me in your personal capacity, and in your letter of September 15, you assured me in the following words with regard

to the Lahore Resolution: "Believe me, I approach you as a seeker, though I represent nobody but myself" and that you were open to conviction and conversion.

You had informed me by your letter of September 11 as follows: "It is true that I said an ocean separated you and me in outlook. But that had no reference to the Lahore Resolution of the League. The League Resolution is indefinite". I naturally, therefore, proceeded, in reply, to ask you by my letter of September 11 as follows: "You say the Lahore Resolution is indefinite. You never asked me for any clarification or explanation of the terms of the Resolution; but you really indicated your emphatic opposition to the very basis and the fundamental principles embodied in it. I would, therefore, like to know in what way or respect the Lahore Resolution is indefinite," and I sent you a reminder on September 13, to which you replied by your letter of September 15, not confining yourself to matters of clarification, but introducing other extraneous matters, with some of which I had already dealt, in reply to this letter of yours of September 15, by my letter of September 17, and furnished you with all the clarifications, informing you that you had introduced several matters which could hardly be discussed in a satisfactory manner by means of correspondence.

I have already given you all the clarifications you require so far as the Lahore Resolution goes and its text is concerned. You again raise further arguments, reasons and grounds and continue to persist in a disquisition on the point, amongst others, whether Muslims of India are a nation, and then you proceed further to say: "Can we not agree to differ on the question of 'two nations' and yet solve the problem on the basis of self-determination?"

It seems to me that you are labouring under some misconception of the real meaning of the word "self-determination." Apart from the inconsistencies and contradictions of the various positions that you have adopted in the course of our correspondence, as indicated above, can you not appreciate our point of view that we claim the right of self-determination as a nation and not as a territorial unit, and that we are entitled to exercise

our inherent right as a Muslim nation, which is our birth-right? Whereas you are labouring under the wrong idea that "self-determination" means only that of "a territorial unit," which, by the way, is neither demarcated nor defined yet, and there is no union or federal constitution of India in being, functioning as a sovereign Central Government. Ours is a case of division and carving out two independent sovereign States by way of settlement between two major nations, Hindus and Muslims, and not of severance or secession *from any existing union*, which is *non est* in India. The right of self-determination, which we claim, postulates that we are a nation, and as such it would be the self-determination of the Muslims, and they alone are entitled to exercise that right.

I hope you will now understand that your question 15(a) does not arise out of the Lahore Resolution or of any part thereof. As to 15(b), again it does not arise as a matter of clarification, for it will be a matter for the constitution-making body chosen by Pakistan to deal with and decide all matters as a sovereign body representing Pakistan *vis-a-vis* the constitution-making body of Hindustan or any other party concerned. There cannot be Defence and similar matters of "common concern," when it is accepted that Pakistan and Hindustan will be two separate, independent, sovereign States. I hope I have now given all satisfactory explanations, over and above the matter of clarification of the Lahore Resolution, in the hope of converting you as an individual "seeker."

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

XII

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 22, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

Your letter of yesterday (21st inst.) so disturbed me that I thought I would postpone my reply till after we had met at the usual time. Though I made no advance at our meeting, I think I see somewhat clearly what you

are driving at. The more I think about the "two-nations" theory, the more alarming it appears to be. The book recommended by you gives me no help. It contains half-truths and its conclusions or inferences are unwarranted. I am unable to accept the proposition that the Muslims of India are a nation distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of India. Mere assertion is no proof. The consequences of accepting such a proposition are dangerous in the extreme. Once the principle is admitted, there would be no limit to claims for cutting up India into numerous divisions which would spell India's ruin. I have, therefore, suggested a way out. Let it be a partition as between two brothers, if a division there must be.

You seem to be averse to a plebiscite. In spite of the admitted importance of the League, there must be clear proof that the people affected desire partition. In my opinion, all the people inhabiting the area ought to express their opinion specifically on this single issue of division. Adult suffrage is the best method, but I would accept any other equivalent.

You summarily reject the idea of common interest between the two arms. I can be no willing party to a division which does not provide for the simultaneous safeguarding of common interests such as Defence, Foreign Affairs and the like. There will be no feeling of security by the people of India without a recognition of the natural and mutual obligations arising out of physical contiguity.

Your letter shows a wide divergence of opinion and outlook between us. Thus, you adhere to the opinion often expressed by you that the August 1942 Resolution is "inimical to the ideals and demands of Muslim India." There is no proof for this sweeping statement.

We seem to be moving in a circle. I have made a suggestion. If we are bent on agreeing, as I hope we are, let us call in a third party or parties to guide or even arbitrate between us.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

XIII

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

September 23, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am in receipt of your letter of September 22, and I thank you for it. I am sorry that you think I have summarily rejected the idea of common interest between the two arms, and now you put it somewhat differently from 15(b), when you say there will be no feeling of security by the people of India without a recognition of the natural and mutual obligations arising out of physical contiguity. My answer, already given, is that it will be for the constitution-making body of Pakistan and that of Hindustan or any other party concerned, to deal with such matters on the footing of their being two independent States.

I am really surprised when you say there is no proof of what you characterize as a sweeping statement of mine, that the August 1942 Resolution is inimical to the ideals and demands of Muslim India. The Resolution in its essence is as follows:

(*a*) immediate grant of complete Independence and setting up immediately of a Federal Central Government on the basis of a united democratic Government of India with federated units or provinces, which means establishing a Hindu *Raj*.

(*b*) that this National Government so set up will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly, which will be chosen by adult franchise, which will prepare a constitution for the Goverment of India, which means that the Constituent Assembly chosen will be composed of an overwhelming majority of Hindus, nearly 75 per cent.

(*c*) to enforce this demand of the Congress, the August Resolution decides on and sanctions a resort to mass civil disobedience at your command and when ordered by you as the sole dictator of the Congress.

This demand is basically and fundamentally opposed to the ideals and demands of Muslim India of Pakistan, as embodied in the Lahore Resolution, and to enforce such a demand by means of resort to mass civil disobedience is

inimical to the ideals and demands of Muslim India; and if you succeed in realizing this demand, it would be a death-blow to Muslim India. I see from the correspondence and talks between you and me that you are still holding fast to this fateful Resolution.

From the very first day of our talks you made it clear to me, and you have repeatedly said in the course of our correspondence and talks, that you have approached me in your individual capacity, and you assured me that you were a seeker of light and knowledge and that you seriously and earnestly wanted to understand the Lahore Resolution and were open to conviction and conversion. Therefore, in deference to your wishes, I made every effort all these days and in the course of our prolonged talks and correspondence to convert you, but unfortunately, it seems, I have failed. And, now you have made new suggestions and proposals by your letter under reply:

(1) You say: "I have, therefore, suggested a way out. Let it be a partition as between two brothers, if a division there must be." I really do not know what this means, and I would like you to elaborate this proposal and give me some rough outlines of this new idea of yours as to how and when the division is to take place, and in what way it is different from the division envisaged by the Lahore Resolution.

(2) You say: "Let us call in a third party or parties to guide or even arbitrate between us." May I point out that you have repeatedly made clear to me that you are having these talks as an individual seeker? How can any question of a third party or parties to guide or arbitrate between us arise?

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

XIV

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 23, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

Last evening's talk has left a bad taste in the mouth. Our talks and our correspondence seem to run in parallel

lines and never touch one another. We reached the breaking point last evening but, thank God, we were unwilling to part. We resumed discussion and suspended it in order to allow me to keep my time for the evening public prayer.

In order that all possible chance of making any mistake in a matter of this great importance may be removed, I would like you to give me in writing what precisely on your part you would want me to put my signature to.

I adhere to my suggestion that we may call in some outside assistance to help us at this stage.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

XV

JINNAH SAHIB TO GANDHIJI

September 23, 1944.

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am in receipt of your letter of September 23. May I refer you to my letter of to-day's date which I sent to you in reply to yours of September 22? I have nothing new or fresh to add, but I may say that it is not a case of your being asked to put your signature as representing anybody till you clothe yourself with representative capacity and are vested with authority. We stand by, as I have already said, the basis and fundamental principles embodied in the Lahore Resolution of March 1940. I appeal to you once more to revise your policy and programme, as the future of this sub-continent and the welfare of the peoples of India demand that you should face realities.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

XVI

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 24, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

I have two letters of September 23, in reply to my letters of the 22nd and 23rd.

With your assistance, I am exploring the possibilities of reaching an agreement, so that the claim embodied in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore may be reasonably satisfied. You must, therefore, have no apprehensions that the August Resolution will stand in the way of our settlement.

I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations, but as one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims living in the North-West zones, *i.e.*, Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Province, and that part of the Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements, and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India.

Differing from you on the general basis, I can yet recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation contained in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore, 1940, on my basis and on the following terms:

(*a*) The areas should be demarcated by a Commission approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes of the adult population of the areas or through some equivalent method.

(*b*) If the vote is in favour of separation, it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can, therefore, be constituted into two sovereign independent States.

(*c*) There shall be a Treaty of Separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Communications, Customs, Commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties.

(*d*) The Treaty shall also contain terms for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the two States.

(*e*) Immediately on the acceptance of this agreement by the Congress and the League, the two shall decide upon

a common course of action for the attainment of independence of India.

(*f*) The League will, however, be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate.

If you do not agree to these terms, could you let me know in precise terms what you would have me to accept in terms of the Lahore Resolution and bind myself to recommend to the Congress? If you could kindly do this, I shall be able to see, apart from the difference in approach, what definite terms I can agree to. In your letter of September 23, you refer to "the basic and fundamental principles embodied in the Lahore Resolution" and ask me to accept them. Surely, this is unnecessary when, as I feel, I have accepted the concrete consequence that should follow from such acceptance.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

XVII

JINNAH SAHIB TO GANDHIJI

September 25, 1944.

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am in receipt of your letter of September 24, and I thank you for it. You have already rejected the basis and fundamental principles of the Lahore Resolution.

You do not accept that the Mussalmans of India are a nation.

You do not accept that the Mussalmans have an inherent right of self-determination.

You do not accept that they alone are entitled to exercise this right of theirs for self-determination.

You do not accept that Pakistan is composed of two zones, North-West and North-East comprising six provinces, namely, Sind, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam, subject to territorial adjustments that may be agreed upon, as indicated in the Lahore Resolution. The matter of demar-

cating and defining the territories can be taken up after the fundamentals above-mentioned are accepted, and for that purpose machinery may be set up by agreement.

You do not accept the provisions embodied in the Lahore Resolution for safeguarding the minorities, and yet in your letter under reply you say: "With your assistance, I am exploring the possibilities of reaching an agreement so that the claim embodied in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore may be reasonably satisfied," and proceed to say: "You must, therefore, have no apprehensions that the August Resolution will stand in the way of our reaching an agreement."

I have already clearly explained to you that the August Resolution, so long as it stands, is a bar, for it is fundamentally opposed to the Lahore Resolution. You, then, proceed to say: "That Resolution dealt with the question of India as against Britain, and it cannot stand in the way of our settlement." I am not at present concerned with Britain, but the August Resolution, as I have already stated, is against the ideals and demands of the Muslim League. Further, there is the resolution of Jagat Narain Lal, passed by the All-India Congress Committee in May 1942, at Allahabad, which, in express terms, lays down as follows:

> "The A. I. C. C. is of opinion that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component State or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different States and Provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal."

These two resolutions, so long as they stand, are a complete bar to any settlement on the basis of the division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan. It is open to the Congress to revise and modify them, but you are only speaking in your individual capacity, and even in that capacity you are holding fast to the August Resolution, and you have given no indication of your attitude regarding Jagat Narain Lal's Resolution. I have repeatedly made it clear after we had discussed the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, as you maintained that, to use your

own language, "Rajaji not only has not put the Lahore Resolution out of shape and mutilated it, but has given it substance and form," and proceeded to say: "Indeed, in view of your dislike of the Rajaji Formula, I have, at any rate for the moment, put it out of my mind and I am now concentrating on the Lahore Resolution in the hope of finding a ground for mutual agreement."

When I asked for further clarification, which you furnished me by your letter of September 15, you stated by saying: "I have shunted the Rajaji Formula and with your assistance I am applying my mind very seriously to the famous Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League." and thenceforward the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula was not discussed any further, and the question of your representative character and authority, which I had pointed out from the very commencement, therefore, did not arise, as you had given me the task of converting you to the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution, and ever since we discussed the Lahore Resolution only at great length and examined the *pros* and *cons*, and finally you have rejected it.

As a result of our correspondence and discussions, I find that the question of the division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan is only on your lips and it does not come from your heart, and suddenly at the eleventh hour you put forward a new suggestion, consisting only of two sentences, by your letter of September 22, saying: "I have, therefore, suggested a way out. Let it be a partition as between two brothers, if a division there must be." I naturally asked you what this new suggestion of yours meant, and wanted you to give me rough outlines of this new idea of yours as to how and when the division is to take place and in what way it is different from the division envisaged in the Lahore Resolution, and now you have been good enough to give me your amplification, in your letter of September 24 under reply, in which you say: "Differing from you on the general basis, I can yet recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation contained in the Muslim League Resolution of Lahore, 1940, on *my basis* and on the following terms." The terms clearly indicate that

your basis is in vital conflict with, and is opposed to, the Lahore Resolution. Now, let me take your main terms:

(*a*) "I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members, of whom the Muslims living in the North-West zones, *i.e.*, Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Province and that part of the Punjab where they are in *absolute* majority over all the other elements, and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India." If this term were accepted and given effect to, the present boundaries of these provinces would be maimed and mutilated beyond redemption and leave us only with the husk, and it is opposed to the Lahore Resolution.

(*b*) That even in those mutilated areas so defined, the right of self-determination will not be exercised by the Muslims, but by the inhabitants of those areas so demarcated. This again is opposed to the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution.

(*c*) That if the vote is in favour of separation, they shall be allowed to "form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination." Whereas we propose that we should come to a complete settlement of our own immediately, and by our united front and efforts do everything in our power to secure the freedom and independence of the peoples of India on the basis of Pakistan and Hindustan.

(*d*) Next, you say: "There shall be a Treaty of Separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Communications, Customs, Commerce, and the like, which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties." If these vital matters are to be administered by some Central authority, you do not indicate what sort of authority or machinery will be set up to administer these matters, and how and to whom again that authority will be responsible.

According to the Lahore Resolution, as I have already explained to you, all these matters, which are the life-blood of any State, cannot be delegated to any Central authority or government. The matter of security of the two States and the natural and mutual obligations that may arise out of physical contiguity will be for the constitution-making body of Pakistan and that of Hindustan, or other party concerned, to deal with on the footing of their being two independent States. As regards the safeguarding of the rights of minorities, I have already explained that this question of safeguarding the minorities is fully stated in the Lahore Resolution.

You will, therefore, see that the entire basis of your new proposal is fundamentally opposed to the Lahore Resolution, and as I have already pointed out to you, both in the correspondence and in our discussions, it is very difficult for me to entertain counter-proposals and negotiate and reach any agreement or settlement with you as an individual, unless they come from you in your representative capacity. That was the same difficulty with regard to the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, and I made it clear to you at the very outset, but the Formula was discussed as you asserted that it had met the Lahore Resolution in substance, but while you were furnishing me with the clarification of this Formula, you shunted it and we confined ourselves to the Lahore Resolution, and hence the question of your representative capacity did not arise regarding this Formula. But now you have, in your letter of September 24, made a new proposal of your own on your own basis, and the same difficulties present themselves to me as before, and it is difficult to deal with it any further unless it comes from you in your representative capacity.

I cannot agree with you when you finally wind up by saying: "In your letter of September 23, you refer to 'the basis and fundamental principles embodied in the Lahore Resolution' and ask me to accept them. Surely, this is unnecessary when, as I feel, I have accepted the concrete consequence that should follow from such acceptance." This is obviously far from correct. Why not,

then, accept the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution and proceed to settle the details?

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

XVIII

GANDHIJI TO JINNAH SAHIB

September 25, 1944.

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

Yesterday's talk leads me to inflict this letter on you which I trust you will not mind.

Our conversations have come about as a result of your correspondence with Rajaji[1] in July last over his Formula and your consultations with the League Working Committee thereon, and my own letter to you suggesting a meeting between you and me. My proposal of yesterday is an earnest effort to meet the essential requirements of the Lahore Resolution. I would like you, therefore, to think fifty times before throwing away an offer which has been made entirely in the spirit of service in the cause of communal harmony. Do not take, I pray, the responsibility of rejecting the offer. Throw it on your Council. Give me an opportunity of addressing them. If they feel like rejecting it, I would like you to advise the Council to put it before the open session of the League. If you will accept my advice and permit me, I would attend the open session and address it.

You are too technical when you dismiss my proposal for arbitration or outside guidance over points of difference. If I have approached you as an individual, and not in any representative capacity, it is because we believe that if I reach an agreement with you, it will be of material use in the process of securing a Congress-League settlement and acceptance of it by the country. Is it irrelevant or inadmissible to supplement our efforts to con-

[1] See *Appendix*—VII.

vince each other with outside help, guidance, advice or even arbitration?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

XIX

JINNAH SAHIB TO GANDHIJI

September 26, 1944.

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am in receipt of your letter of September 25. It is entirely incorrect and has no foundation in fact for you to say that our conversations have come about as a result of my correspondence with Rajaji in July last over his Formula. It is equally baseless to say "and your consultations with the League Working Committee thereon." It is entirely in response to your letter of July 17, 1944, which I received while I was at Srinagar, with a fervent request on your part to meet you, and you ended that letter by saying: "Do not disappoint me." In my reply, again from Srinagar, dated July 24, 1944, I intimated to you that I would be glad to receive you at my house at Bombay on my return, which would probably be about the middle of August. This was long before the meeting of the Working Committee or that of the Council of the All-India Muslim League, and long before I reached Lahore, and when you arrived here and told me that you were approaching me in your individual capacity, I at once made it clear to you and informed you both in our talks and by my letters, that the position you had taken up had no precedent for it, and further that it was not possible to negotiate and reach an agreement unless both the parties were fully represented; for it is one-sided business, as it will not be binding upon any organization in any sense whatever, but you would as an individual only recommend it, if any agreement is reached, to the Congress and the country, whereas it would be binding upon me as the President of the Muslim League. I cannot accept this position. I hope you do see the unfairness and the great disadvantage to me, and it is so simple and elementary for anyone to understand.

As regards your proposal of yesterday, which you have amplified in your letter of September 24, I have already sent you my reply.

With regard to your suggestion to be allowed to address the meeting of the Council, and if they feel like rejecting your "offer", the matter should be put before the open session and you should be allowed to address the open session, let me inform you that only a member or delegate is entitled to participate in the deliberations of the meetings of the Council or in the open session, respectively. Besides, it is a most extraordinary and unprecedented suggestion to make. However, I thank you for your advice.

As regards your proposal for arbitration and outside guidance, I have already replied to you; and it is not merely technicality but a matter of substance. I fully reciprocate your desire of securing a Congress-League settlement. However, I regret I have failed to convince you and convert you as I was hopeful of doing so.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. Jinnah

XX

Gandhiji To Jinnah Sahib

September 26, 1944.

Dear Qaid-e-Azam,

In view of my letter to you of yesterday, left to myself, I would have refrained from dealing with your letter before our meeting to-day. But I have deferred to Rajaji's advice to finish the chain of correspondence.

I confess I am unable to understand your persistent refusal to appreciate the fact that the Formula presented to you by me in my letter of the 24th, as well as the Formula presented to you by Rajaji, gave you virtually what is embodied in the Lahore Resolution, providing at the same time what is absolutely necessary to make the arrangement acceptable to the country. You keep on saying that I should accept certain thesis, which you call the basis and fundamental principles of the Lahore Resolution, while I have been contending that the best way

for us, who differ in our approach to the problem, is to give body to the demand as it stands in the Resolution and work it out to our mutual satisfaction. It is on this plan that I understand Rajaji's Formula to be conceived, and it is on the same plan that I have tried to work it out in the course of, and as a result of, our talks. I contend that either gives you the substance of the Lahore Resolution. Unfortunately, you reject both. And I cannot accept the Lahore Resolution as you want me to, especially when you seek to introduce into its interpretation theories and claims which I cannot accept and which I cannot ever hope to induce India to accept.

Your constant references to my not being clothed with representative authority are really irrelevant. I have approached you so that, if you and I can agree upon a common course of action, I may use what influence I possess for its acceptance by the Congress and the country. If you break, it cannot be because I have no representative capacity or because I have been unwilling to give you satisfaction in regard to the claim embodied in the Lahore Resolution.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

XXI

Jinnah Sahib To Gandhiji

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

September 26, 1944.

I have received your letter of September 26 and I note that you have written it with Rajaji's advice. Of course, it is for you to follow such advice as you may choose to do so, but I am only concerned for the moment with you. I note that at the last moment you have resurrected the Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, although it was shunted all this time, and you proceed to say that this Formula gives me virtually what is embodied in the Lahore Resolution. You further say that on the same plan you have tried to formulate your latest proposals as mentioned in your letter of September 24, and you maintain

that either gives me the substance of the Lahore Resolution. In your previous letter, you asserted that your Formula gives me the "essence" of the Lahore Resolution. I see a very close family resemblance between the two, and the substance of one or the other is practically the same, only it is put in different language, and I have already expressed my opinion that, in my judgment, they neither meet the substance nor essence of the Lahore Resolution. On the contrary, both are calculated completely to torpedo the Pakistan demand of Muslim India. I have never asked you to accept certain thesis, nor have I introduced any theories in the Lahore Resolution. These and theories are matters for scholars to indulge in.

I am sorry I have to repeat, but I am compelled to do so, that I cannot agree with you that my references to your not being clothed with representative authority are really irrelevant. On the contrary, they have an important bearing, as I have already explained to you more than once. You again repeat that if you and I can agree upon a common course of action, you may use what influence you possess for its acceptance by the Congress and the country. I have already stated from the very beginning that that is not enough, for the reasons I have already given. Your representative capacity comes into play when you are making counter-proposals, and I cannot understand how you can say that it is irrelevant. No responsible organization can entertain any proposal from any individual, however great he may be, unless it is backed up with the authority of a recognized organization and comes from its fully accredited representative. However, I need not labour this point any more, as I have already explained it in our previous correspondence.

If a break comes, it will be because you have not satisfied me in regard to the essence of the claim embodied in the Lahore Resolution. It is not a question of your being unwilling, but in fact it is so. If a break comes, it will be most unfortunate. If one does not agree with you or differs from you, you are always right and the other party is always wrong; and the next thing

is that many are waiting prepared, in your circle, to pillory me when the word goes, but I must face all threats and consequences, and I can only act according to my judgment and conscience.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

AFTER THE BREAKDOWN

"Failure should only serve as a spur to further effort."

At the end of the evening public prayer, which took place immediately after his last interview with Jinnah Sahib on September 27, 1944, Gandhiji addressed the audience. Speaking in Gujarati, he said he was not addressing them in Hindustani as before because he wanted his words to go straight to the hearts of the audience most of whom were Gujaratis. He had particularly the women in mind who were not accustomed to Hindustani speech.

He had told them that when the talks were over he would let them know the result. That stage had been reached the day before, but as copies of the correspondence were not ready, its actual release had to be postponed till that day. Authorized copies of the correspondence had now been sent to the Press with a prefatory statement by the Qaid-e-Azam.[1]

Hitherto he had told them that he was not without hope with regard to the outcome of the talks. He had

[1] *The following statement was handed to Pressmen by Jinnah Sahib along with the text of the correspondence on the evening of September* 27, 1944:

Mr. Gandhi from the very commencement of our talks made it clear that he had approached me in his individual capacity and that he represented no one but himself. However, he assured me that he was really open to conviction and conversion to the Muslim League Lahore Resolution of March 1940.

Without prejudice to my objection that in order to reach any settlement, negotiations can only be carried on properly when the other side is also fully represented and vested with authority, in deference to Mr. Gandhi's wishes I agreed to the task of persuading and converting him to the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution.

I have placed before him everything and every aspect of the Muslim point of view in the course of our prolonged talks and correspondence, and we discussed all the *pros* and *cons* generally, and I regret to say that I have failed in my task of converting Mr. Gandhi. We have, therefore, decided to release to the Press the correspondence that has passed between us. Nevertheless, we hope that the public will not feel embittered, and we trust that this is not the final end of our effort.

to confess that the result that he was hoping for had not materialized. But he had no sense of disappointment or despondency. He was convinced that even out of that breakdown good would result.

Although the Qaid-e-Azam and he had known each other fairly well in public life before, they had never come into such a close personal contact. Their conversations were carried out with friendliness and cordiality. He wanted all the communities to cultivate the same spirit of friendliness and cordiality in their relations with one another. They should try to convert one another through it.

They might ask, why was it then that he and the Qaid-e-Azam had failed to convert each other? His reply was that he had tried his level best to go as far as he could to meet the Qaid-e-Azam's view-point. He had taken incalculable pains to understand him and to make himself understood. But he had failed.

He had placed before the Qaid-e-Azam Rajaji's Formula, but that did not commend itself to him. He had thereupon put forth another proposal of his own in its place, but even that had failed to secure Jinnah Sahib's approval. In the same way, Jinnah Sahib's proposal had failed to commend itself to him. If either of them had been weak, they would have possibly come to some sort of agreement; but as responsible men they could not afford to be weak. A helmsman had to be firm and unwavering or else the ship would founder upon the rocks. Each one of them had tried to convince the other. It was possible that both of them might be in the wrong. But so long as each felt himself to be in the right, he could not let go his hold.

The news of the breakdown, he knew, would cause grief to the friends of India and might give cause for jubilation to their enemies. He drew their attention to the last sentence in his statement in which he had said that it was not the final end of their effort.

Although they had been unable to appreciate each other's view-point, the public could help them to do so. They should not lose heart. If there was any one

who had reason to feel disappointed, it was he. He had knocked at the Qaid-e-Azam's door. But as he had already observed there was no despondency in him. It was not for a votary of truth and non-violence to feel despondent if his effort at times failed to yield the result aimed at. Failure should only serve as spur to further effort. God alone knew what was best for them. It was not for them to question God's ways. Therefore, instead of feeling despondent, they should regard the breakdown as a challenge to their faith and as an incentive for greater effort for establishing true unity among the various communities.

ON TALKS WITH JINNAH

"The rule of majority does not mean that it should suppress the opinion of even an individual, if it is sound. An individual's opinion should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound on merits. That is my view of real democracy."

On September 28, 1944, Gandhiji held a Press conference attended by about 40 Indian and foreign journalists. He read the following statement:

"It is a matter of deep regret that we two could not reach an agreement. But there is no cause for disappointment. The breakdown is only so-called. It is an adjournment *sine die*. Each one of us must now talk to the public and put our view-points before them. If we do so dispassionately and if the public co-operate, we may reach a solution of the seemingly insoluble at an early date. My experience of the precious three weeks confirms me in the view that the presence of the third power hinders the solution. A mind enslaved cannot act as if it was free. I need not impute base motives to the Rulers to prove what seems to me to be an axiomatic truth. Nevertheless, I am going to continue to work for the solution as I have been during these three weeks. The questions for consideration are simple. Has the Rajaji Formula or mine made a reasonable approach to the Lahore Resolution? If they or either of them is such an approach, all parties and especially the members of the Muslim League should ask the Qaid-e-Azam to revise his opinion. If Rajaji and I have stultified the Lahore Resolution, we should be educated. The chief thing is for the Press and the public to avoid partisanship and bitterness."

"I shall act as my inner voice tells me," replied Gandhiji to a question about his future plans, whether he proposed to concentrate on a Hindu-Muslim settlement or take up political work, seeking imprisonment if necessary.

Asked how far the offer he had made had conceded the demand made in the Lahore Resolution of the League, Gandhiji emphasized that the Rajaji Formula or the Formula that he presented conceded the substance of the League demand.

"In my opinion, either Formula gives as much as can reasonably be expected with due regard to the interests of the whole of India," he said.

In answer to a question whether his offer was to be treated now as withdrawn, he said that so far as he was concerned, the offer he had made stood. It was not made in any bargaining spirit.

"I think," he said, "it is a just solution of the problem and it is in the spirit of the policy which the Congress has consistently adopted in connection with the communal question, namely, self-determination."

A number of questions were put on the representative character of the two leaders who conducted the negotiations and why Gandhiji prolonged the talks when he was apprised of Jinnah Sahib's views on the first day of the talks.

Gandhiji answered: "I am a man reputed to have inexhaustible patience, and I had no reason to despair of either being converted by the Qaid-e-Azam or, in my turn, converting him. Therefore, so long as there was the slightest possibility, I clung to the hope that we shall pull through to a solution. Haste in such cases is a most dangerous thing. You should, therefore, conclude that yesterday was really the moment when the public should have been taken into confidence.

"As for myself, I am entirely satisfied that we have not wasted these three weeks. I have no doubt whatsoever that we know now each other better than ever before."

"When you agreed to meet Mr. Jinnah, did you meet him on the basis that he was the sole representative of the Muslims?" asked a reporter.

Gandhiji replied: "I have never admitted that claim, but I have said throughout that the Muslim League is by far the most representative Muslim organization. It would have been folly on my part not to recognize this,

but I have always been aware that there is outside the League a large body of Muslims which does not see eye to eye with the League and which does not believe in the 'two-nations' theory"

Gandhiji asserted that the fight for freedom had not been suspended when he approached the Qaid-e-Azam. "My approach to the Qaid-e-Azam was itself a part of the fight for freedom," he said.

Asked if there was any possibility of the two leaders meeting again in the near future, Gandhiji said: "I hope so. It is for the Press and the public to make it possible and hasten the date. I assure you that we have not parted as enemies, but friends."

If the Rajaji Formula or his own Formula had conceded the substance of the Lahore Resolution, then why not agree to the Resolution itself? was the next question.

Gandhiji replied: "Although the Resolution does not say so, if you study the correspondence, it shows that it is based on the 'two-nations' theory and it has been known as the Pakistan Resolution. Further, I had to examine the Resolution in view of the interpretation put upon it by the Qaid-e-Azam in his numerous speeches and statements in elucidation of the Resolution. It is indisputable that the Resolution, while it does not enunciate that theory, is based upon that theory. The Qaid-e-Azam has insisted upon that. Therefore, I urge that apart from the 'two-nations' theory, if I could accept the principle of division of India in accordance with the demand of the League, he should accept it. But, unfortunately, it was just there we split."

Asked about Jinnah Sahib's views regarding a Provisional Interim Government, he said: "I am not sure that the Qaid-e-Azam puts great weight on the Interim Government. I gave all the explanation of my conception of an Interim Government without any reservation. It is quite clear in my letter. If I did not go any further, it was because I could not; and, even if you cross-examine me any further, I would have to say I could not go any further. But if, as you suggest, the Qaid-e-Azam attached greater weight to it, then it was open

to him to put it into concrete form. I would have then taxed myself and spared no effort to accept the proposition or to make some other suggestions."

Gandhiji was told that those Muslims who did not see eye to eye with the League had no real Muslim backing. He replied: "Therefore, I have said that the League is by far the most representative of Muslim opinion, but I cannot despise the others by simply saying that they have no Muslim backing. What does it matter if they have no more Muslim backing if the opinion represented by a single Muslim, or by a body of Muslims, whom you can count on your fingers, is intrinsically sound? The way of approaching a question is not to examine the numerical strength of those behind the opinion, but to examine the soundness of the opinion on merits, or else we will never reach a solution, and if we reach one, it will be a blind solution simply because it is the wish of the largest body. If the largest body goes wrong, it is up to me to say you are wrong and not to submit.

"The rule of majority does not mean that it should supress the opinion of even an individual, if it is sound. An individual's opinion should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound on merits. That is my view of real democracy."

Gandhiji was asked what he thought of the idea of formation of provinces on linguistic, cultural and communal basis.

As for redistribution on a cultural basis, he did not really know what it meant and he was unable to understand how provinces could be reconstituted on communal lines unless there was a suggestion that there should be intermigration of the various communities to concentrate in particular areas. It seemed to him to be fantastic and impossible. "We are not," he said, "inhabiting a country full of deserts and waste lands. We are a densely populated country and I do not see the slightest chance for such redistribution."

"In that respect the Lahore Resolution is quite sound—where there is an obvious Muslim majority, they should

be allowed to constitute a separate State by themselves, and that has been fully conceded in the Rajaji Formula or my Formula. There is not much distinction between them. That right is conceded without the slightest reservation. But if it means utterly independent sovereignty, so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it is an impossible proposition. That means war to the knife. It is not a proposition that resolves itself into a voluntary or friendly solution.

"Therefore, the Rajaji Formula and my Formula have presented certain things to be in common between sovereign States. Therefore, there is no question of one party overbearing the other or the Centre having an overbearing Hindu majority. I think our Formula should be critically examined and sympathetically examined and it would be found that the Formula concedes everything that could reasonably be conceded if we consider ourselves to be one family. Children of the same family, dissatisfied with one another by reason of change of religion, if they should separate, then the separation should be within ourselves and not separation in the face of the whole world. When two brothers separate, they do not become enemies of one another in the eyes of the world. The world will still recognize them as brothers."

A journalist said that some of the Nationalist Muslims felt that the Congress through Gandhiji meeting Jinnah Sahib had put them in a false position and that they might have to change their attitude towards Indian nationalism.

Gandhiji replied that it was an extraordinary suggestion. Nationalist Muslims were nationalists simply because they could not be otherwise. "I am a nationalist," he said, "not in order to please anybody, but because I cannot be otherwise. And if I approached the Qaid-e-Azam, I approached him in the common interests of myself and Nationalist Muslims and other nationalists. Nationalist Muslims, so far as I know, were delighted when I approached the Qaid-e-Azam and were looking forward to a proper solution in the confidence that I would not sell the interests represented by them.

"Undoubtedly, a Nationalist Muslim represents the

nation, but he represents the Muslims also, who are a part of the nation. He would be guilty of disloyalty, if he sacrifices the Muslim interests. But my nationalism has taught me that I would be guilty of disloyalty, if I sacrifice the interest of a single Indian."

Asked if there was any difference between his present attitude towards Muslim League demand and the stand he took in 1942, Gandhiji said: "There is very great difference. In 1942, Rajaji had not 'burst' on the scene as he did at the Aga Khan Palace with a concrete proposition. It reflects very great credit on his persistence. He never takes up a standpoint without the fullest consideration and having taken it up, he follows it to the bitterest end. He had abundant faith in my loyalty and he never gave me up as I have never given him up. When he found me in the Aga Khan Palace and presented the Formula, I did not take even five minutes and I said 'Yes' because I saw it in a concrete shape.

"My mind is narrow. I have not read much literature. I have not seen much of the world. I have concentrated upon certain things in life and beyond that I have no other interest. Therefore, I could not realize the meaning of Rajaji's stand and I disliked it. But when he came with a concrete formula—I myself a concrete being of flesh and blood—and when he had put something in concrete shape, I felt I could hug it and touch it. Therefore, you see the vast difference between 1942 and to-day. However, thereby I have not departed from the Congress standpoint in general terms. Congress has accepted self-determination and the Rajaji Formula has also accepted the principle of self-determination and, therefore, the Formula had become common ground."

Proceeding, Gandhiji explained that he accepted the principle of sovereign States, consistent with friendliness. "Friendliness suggests," he said, "that before the whole world we must act as one nation, not united by extraneous circumstances, or united by force of British arms, but united by a greater force, that is, our own determined will."

Here is a further string of questions which he answered in 'slow, sweet and deliberate' manner as follows:

Q. What will you do next?

A. I leave it to my inner voice to tell me that.

Q. Are you meeting again?

A. Ask the future.

Q. How did you like Mr. Jinnah?

A. Not half so bad as you think he is.

Q. Didn't you waste your time with him?

A. No, these talks themselves are a part of our political fight.

Q. Why did you talk so long when there was no basis at all?

A. Haste is dangerous. I am notorious for my inexhaustible patience.

Q. Why did you not agree to a Provisional Government at least?

A. Ask Jinnah Sahib.

Q. Are you satisfied there was nothing the matter with your offer?

A. Nothing. It was the justest solution I could think of.

Q. How do you explain your differences?

A. I am for a quiet family partition, Jinnah Sahib wants total separation as between two men who are sovereign in their own right.

Q. As an alternative, why not divide India according to language and culture?

A. But what is 'culture'? Impossible to define.

Q. Do you consider the 'C. R.' Formula concrete enough?

A. Yes, I am a very concrete being.

Q. How did you like the behaviour of the Pressmen during your talks?

A. If I had been Jinnah Sahib, I would have performed *satyagraha* against some of you.

Q. How did you enjoy your stay here.

A. Enjoy! Enjoy, indeed! Look at these lights burning during day and these fans running inside, while breezes of the sea are blowing outside! My Sevagram without these is infinitely more to my liking.

WHY THE TALKS FAILED

"My view has been all along that we cannot be free among ourselves until we are free from Imperial domination."

The following is a record of an interview given by Gandhiji to Stuart Gelder of the "News Chronicle", London, on September 29, 1944, at Bombay.

Mr. Gandhi told me to-day why his talks with Mr. Jinnah failed to produce a solution of the Hindu-Muslim differences. "I could not accept the 'two-nations' basis. This was Mr. Jinnah's demand. He wants immediate recognition of the North-West Frontier Province, Sind, the whole of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam as sovereign and completely independent Pakistan". He wants Mr. Gandhi to agree to this amputation from the rest of India without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants by plebiscite. He has rejected the Rajagopalachari Formula.

I asked Mr. Gandhi what he was prepared to recognize as Pakistan and on what basis there could be any hope of agreement in future.

He was frank and precise. He replied: "I want to make it clear that I believe Mr. Jinnah is sincere, but I think he is suffering from hallucination when he imagines that an unnatural division of India could bring either happiness or prosperity to the people concerned. It was my suggestion that, provided there was the safeguard of a plebiscite, there could be sovereignty for the predominantly Muslim areas, but it should be accompanied by bonds of alliance between Hindustan and Pakistan. There should be common policy and a working arrangement on Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications and similar matters. This is manifestly vital to the welfare of both parts of India." This arrangement, Mr. Gandhi said, could not interfere with the internal life of Muslims who would not be subject in any way to Hindu domination. Such a division would not create an artificial split between people who, whatever their religious faiths, are descended from

a common stock and are all Indians. "Unfortunately", said Mr. Gandhi, "Mr. Jinnah would have none of it and asked me to agree to the principle of two nations entirely separate."

I asked Mr. Gandhi if he had adopted this attitude because he thought he could not "sell" such a division to the country or because he thought it wrong in principle.

He replied: "Because it is fundamentally wrong in principle. If I had thought Mr. Jinnah's view was right, even though the whole world were against me, I would have accepted it personally and given him my unquestioned allegiance."

I then asked Mr. Gandhi: "If Mr. Jinnah agreed to your view of division, but insisted there should be no plebiscite or a plebiscite in which only Muslims would vote, would you settle on this basis?"

Mr. Gandhi answered: "Never. How could I agree in a personal or any other capacity to decide the future of millions of people without their having anything to say about their destiny?"

"What", I asked, "was your impression of Mr. Jinnah's attitude on the question of an Interim National Government which you outlined to me in July?"[1]

Mr. Gandhi replied: "Mr. Jinnah has said that he is deeply interested in Independence, but it did not seem to me that he set as great store by it as immediate recognition of the Pakistan he wants. Whereas, you see, my view has been all along that we cannot be free among ourselves until we are free from Imperial domination. We have parted as friends. These days have not been wasted. I am convinced that Mr. Jinnah is a good man. I hope we shall meet again. I am a man of prayer and I shall pray for understanding. In the meantime, it is the duty of the public to digest the situation and bring the pressure of their opinion upon us."

[1] See *Gelder Interview*, p. 81.

ASSURANCE TO NATIONALIST SIKHS

"I could never be guilty of blessing anything which is contrary to the national interest."

The following correspondence was passed between Gandhiji and Sardar Durlab Singh, General Secretary of the Central Sikh Youth League:

LETTER FROM SARDAR DURLAB SINGH, DATED LAHORE, NOVEMBER 12, 1944.

Respected Bapuji,

I believe you are aware of the developments that are taking place in the Sikh politics every day. Several misunderstandings are being created and the mind of the Sikh public is being poisoned constantly against the Congress. The Sikh Youth League and other Nationalist Sikhs, who are working among the Sikhs for the cause of nationalism, have to face several difficulties, and I would, therefore, request you to kindly clarify the following points and remove the misunderstandings as far as possible:

The Congress had promised in its Lahore Resolution of 1929 that no constitution would be acceptable to the Congress which does not give the fullest satisfaction to the Sikhs. You know a large number of Sikhs are perturbed over Rajaji's proposals. Supposing Mr. Jinnah had accepted the proposals in full, or in an amended form, what would have been the position of the Sikhs in that case?

Even the Akalis feel very indignant because you did not touch the question of meeting the Sikh deputation as suggested by Master Tara Singh in his letter. Can you please make it clear why it was not considered desirable to invite the Sikh leaders before proceeding to Mr. Jinnah for the talks.

Mr. Jagat Narain Lal's Resolution clearly states that the Congress would be no party to the vivisection of the country. Is it not a fact that Rajaji's proposals run counter to that Resolution? The Sikh public is made to believe that Gandhiji does not favour the idea of the Sikhs

remaining in the Congress because of their belief in the sword. The Sikhs have always made greatest possible contribution to the cause of India's freedom, and they are prepared to do that in future also, but such an attitude on your part is likely to discourage them. Will you very kindly throw some light on this issue?

Master Tara Singh and other responsible Akali leaders have often declared in the Press and on the platform that the Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact was enacted with the consent and blessing of the Congress High Command and Sardar Patel's special representative who was present in the Punjab throughout the negotiations, and that the Sardar was kept informed of all the developments. Further, it is said that the Azad Punjab Scheme was introduced with your consent and blessings. The Nationalist Sikhs regard both the schemes as anti-national and opposed to the interests of the country and the community. Can you kindly guide us in the matter?

In the end, I will request you, Bapuji, to give a general assurance to the Nationalist Sikhs that their interests are safe in your hands and that they will not be sacrificed at any cost. The heart of the Sikh masses is with the Congress, and nationalism and patriotism are their proud heritage. They cannot depart from these principles, but let them have this satisfaction at least that the Congress will do no injustice to them and that they will have their proper place in free India.

Praying for your long life.

Yours sincerely,
DURLAB SINGH

GANDHIJI'S REPLY DATED SEVAGRAM, NOVEMBER 14, 1944.

Dear Sardar Durlab Singh,

This is my answer to your questions:

(1) My association with Rajaji in his Formula could not affect the Sikh position in the slightest degree, even if Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah accepted it. The Lahore Resolution of the Congress referred to by you stands. The result of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's acceptance would

have gone to the Sikhs and others interested to secure their acceptance. I had made this clear in my letter to Masterji.

(2) I cannot understand the Akali indignation. My meeting a deputation was unnecessary in view of my absolute assurance.[1] If Masterji had wanted to bring his friends to me, in spite of my assurance, I would have gladly seen them as I did other friends who sought clarification from me.

(3) Maulana Sahib explained the implications of the Jagat Narain Lal's Resolution, which please see. But supposing that it is inconsistent with the Rajaji Formula and the Congress accepts the latter, there is nothing to prevent the Congress from rescinding the Resolution.

(4) How could I favour a contrary opinion when I have always given the closest collaboration to Sikh friends? Those Sikhs who do not accept the Congress creed naturally refrain, like many others, from joining the Congress.

(5) I know nothing about the Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact, much less about the Congress High Com-

[1] *The following letter of Gandhiji to Master Tara Singh contained the assurance referred to:*

SEVAGRAM,
August 15, 1944.

Dear Master Tara Singh,

I thank you for your reasoned letter of the 5th instant. It came into my hands only to-day. It was received here on the 10th. The post has become very heavy. Even important letters such as yours do not come into my hands immediately they are received. I have not so recovered as to permit my working all hours of the day. This preface is merely to show you the importance I attach to your letter.

But nothing is lost by the delay. We shall come to no final terms. The smallest interest will have the same weight as the largest. That is the requirement on my creed. It is the lapse if I do not live up to it. With this assurance I would leave you for the time being. Pray that both of us may have the strength to do what is wholly right and not to tone down the right for the sake of expediency.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

mand's association with it. Nor do I know the details of the Azad Punjab Scheme.

I could never be guilty of blessing anything which is contrary to the national interests. You can certainly have the assurance that the interests of the Nationalist Sikhs, as also of all nationalists, are safe in my hands, and also, I presume, in the Congress hands, though, as you know, I have no authority to speak on behalf of the Congress.

There are many inventions about me going round. I would warn friends against giving credence to any of them without reference to me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

REPLY TO SAPRU COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE

"Although I could not agree to the 'two-nations' theory, I agreed on the basis of members of a family desiring severance of the family tie in matters of conflict, but not in all matters so as to become enemies one of the other, as if there was nothing common between the two except enmity."

The Chairman of the Conciliation Committee, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, sent to Gandhiji the Committee's Questionnaire for a reply, but Gandhiji wrote back saying that he would prefer to reply to any specific questions that may be put to him with reference to his talks with Jinnah Sahib. Accordingly, the Chairman sent him a set of questions which sought clarification on the subject.

The following is the text of the questions and answers:

Q. In your letter of the 24th of September, 1944, to Mr. Jinnah you said as follows:

"You ask for my conception of the basis for a Provisional Interim Government. I would have told you if I had any scheme in mind."

Did you never discuss even the outlines of any scheme during the course of your conversation?

A. What I told Qaid-e-Azam was the exact truth. I had no idea of what he meant, for he never told me what he had in mind. Therefore, I can answer your question by saying we never discussed the outlines of any scheme of Interim Government except what I have said.

Q. In answering the first question, please refer to Mr. Jinnah's letter of the 14th of September, in which he said: "You, being the sponsor of this Gandhi-Rajaji Formula, should give me some rough idea and picture of it, so that I may understand what this part of the Formula means." Did you give any reply to this? If so, what? If not, why not?

A. The foregoing answer deals with your second question.

Q. In his letter of the 17th of September, Mr. Jinnah says that 'the word (Pakistan) has now become synonymous with the Lahore Resolution.' Did you ask him whether in accordance

with the Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim League a scheme of Constitution in accordance with the basic principles providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as Defence, External Affairs, Communications, Customs and such other matters as may be necessary, had been prepared? Was your attention drawn to any such scheme by Mr. Jinnah?

A. No. Qaid-e-Azam's position unfortunately was that while he could come as far as seeing me and trying to convince me of his position, he, the President of the League, could not discuss details with me, a mere individual. But so far as I could gather from our conversations, he had no prepared scheme. As the correspondence shows, he had referred me to two books both of which I read, but neither of which could help me to understand Qaid-e-Azam's exact position. One thing he insisted upon was that if I first accepted the Pakistan of his conception, he could then discuss other things with me even though I was but an individual.

Q. Is it true that the real breakdown between you and Mr. Jinnah came about on the question of Central authority or Government? Please refer in this connection to Mr. Jinnah's letter of the 25th of September, Clause (*d*) in which he says: 'If these vital matters (suggested in the quotation from your letter with which Clause (*d*) begins) are to be administered by some Central authority, you do not indicate what sort of authority or machinery will be set up to administer these matters, and how and to whom again that authority will be responsible.' Did you, at any stage, indicate to him that you wanted a Central Government or a Central Legislature to deal with a limited number of subjects, such as, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Communications, Customs, Commerce and the like?

A. It can be said that the breakdown took place because we would not come to agreement on the 'two-nations' theory of Qaid-e-Azam's. As the correspondence will show, I wanted to avoid a Central Government. I suggested an authority acceptable to both the parties, but he would insist first on complete partition as between two nations, and then an agreement between them as on Foreign Affairs etc. He would not agree to anything simultaneous.

Q. In that very clause (Clause (*d*)) Mr. Jinnah says: "According to the Lahore Resolution, as I have already explained to you, all these matters, which are the life-blood of any State, cannot be delegated to any Central authority or Government." Then, he says that "the matter of security of the two States and the natural and mutual obligations that may arise out of physical contiguity will be for the constitution-making body of Pakistan and that of Hindustan, or other party concerned, to deal with on the footing of their being two independent States." Did you understand Mr. Jinnah's position to be that he intended that Pakistan and Hindustan should be completely independent sovereign States with no connection between them except by treaty? If so, did he tell you what was to happen if either party broke the treaty and what was the authority which could enforce the provisions of such a treaty?

A. Of course, he wanted two independent sovereign States with no connection between them except by treaty. If any party broke the treaty, the consequence would be what has happened throughout the world uptil now, *i.e.*, war. Therefore, I did not ask and he did not tell me as to what would happen if either party broke the treaty.

Q. As regards the C. R. Formula, can you explain why Mr. Jinnah was opposed to Clause 2 of that Formula which demanded a plebiscite of all the inhabitants on the basis of adult suffrage or other practical franchise? Did you understand him to say that in the areas demarcated for Pakistan, the minorities shall be given chance of expressing their choice of staying in Pakistan or not being separated from the rest of the country?

A. Qaid-e-Azam would not have the plebiscite of the Muslims because he thought the League represented the Muslims of India, and that the other communities should have no voice as to Pakistan which was Muslims' exclusive right wherever they were in a majority.

Q. Please refer to your proposals contained in the letter of the 24th of September, in which you said: "There shall be a Treaty of Separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Communications, Customs, Commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be the matters of common interest between the contracting parties." Please explain how that treaty would provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of these matters, and whether you contemplated any machinery which could give effect to the decisions embodied in that treaty. If so, what is the nature of that machinery which you had in mind?

A. I suggested a Board of Representatives of both the States. It was to be an Arbitration Board with administrative powers. For the due carrying out of its decisions, it would largely or solely depend upon the goodwill of the parties or States. But I should not object to a machinery jointly devised by the two States.

Q. Have you any objection to the provinces or States enjoying the fullest autonomy with residuary powers vested in them?

A. None whatsoever.

Q. How do you reconcile Mr. Jagat Narain's Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee with the line that you took in regard to the division of India in the course of your conversations and correspondence with Mr. Jinnah?

A. I depended first upon the decisive interpretation given by the President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and secondly, on my own meaning that the Jagat Narain Lal Resolution should be read together with the others bearing on the question. For, these latter were not cancelled by the Jagat Narain Lal Resolution.

Q. Please refer to Appendix O of the pamphlet known as 'Jinnah-Gandhi Talks' and send to the Committee a short memorandum explaining any points in that summary which you may consider necessary. In this connection, please refer to your Press statement dated the 28th of September, 1944, in the course of which you stated as follows:

> "In that respect the Lahore Resolution is quite sound—where there is an obvious Muslim majority, they should be allowed to constitute a separate State by themselves and that has been fully conceded in the Rajaji Formula or my formula.... But if it means utterly independent sovereignty, so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it is an impossible proposition. That means war to the knife."

What did you mean by saying 'war to the knife' and why did you consider that proposition to be an impossible proposition?

A. 'War to the knife' is a simple English idiom. I have never known it used in the literal sense. It simply means a determined quarrel between parties. I hold that if there is nothing in common between the two, or nothing which does not come in conflict with each other's culture, there can be no friendly mutual agreement.

Q. In your Press statement dated the 28th of September, 1944, you said: "I urge that apart from the 'two-nations' theory, if I could accept the principle of division of India in accordance with the demand of the League, he should accept it. But, unfortunately, it was there just we split." Please explain this more clearly?

A. I think I am explicit enough. I meant that apart from conceding the 'two-nations' theory, I accepted the concrete suggestion of division of India as between members of the same family and, therefore, reserving for partnership things of common interest. But Qaid-e-Azam would have nothing short of the 'two-nations' theory and, therefore, complete dissolution amounting to full sovereignty in the first instance. It was just here that we split, as I have said before.

Q. Are you prepared to admit that the Muslims in India are a separate nation? If so, then why do you deny the Muslims the right of having a separate independent State? If you are not prepared to admit that the Muslims are a separate nation, then on what principle do you agree to a division of India to the limited extent to which you seem to have agreed in the course of your conversation and correspondence with Mr. Jinnah? In this connection, please refer to your interview to the *News Chronicle* on the 29th of September, 1944.

A Although I could not agree to the 'two-nations' theory, I agreed on the basis of members of a family desiring severance of the family tie in matters of conflict, but not in all matters so as to become enemies one of the other, as if there was nothing common between the two except enmity.

THE SIMLA CONFERENCE

"The proposed Conference can do much useful work if it is put in its proper political setting and is, at the very outset, rendered immune from any fissiparous tendency."

In the course of a statement on the Viceregal broadcast,[1] *Gandhiji referred to the proposed Conference of leaders at Simla and said :*

The proposed Conference can do much useful work if it is put in its proper political setting and is, at the very outset, rendered immune from any fissiparous tendency. Undoubtedly all invitees might appear as Indians conjointly bent on achieving India's national goal, and not as persons representing several sections of Indian society.

That is how I have viewed the Bhulabhai-Liaquat Ali understanding[2] which I suppose laid the foundations for the forthcoming Viceregal Conference. Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposal has no such colouring as the Viceregal broadcast would seem to have. I am not ashamed of the part I have played in advising Shri Bhulabhai Desai when he consulted me about his proposal. Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposal, as I understand it, attracted me as one interested in solving the communal tangle,[3] and I assured him that

[1] See *Appendix*—X. [2] See *Appendix*—XI.

[3] *Questioned as to what he meant when he said that the Desai Formula had no such colouring as the Viceroy's would seem to have, and how he thought that the Desai Formula would help to solve the communal tangle, Gandhiji answered:*

"Bhulabhai's proposal has no colouring of caste. There is the 50 per cent. basis as between two political bodies. If Bhulabhai's proposal is the same as the Viceroy's, then I am greatly mistaken. I did not read the proposals in that light. According to Formula, if the Congress chose, it could appoint 50 per cent of any community, non-Hindus, Caste Hindus and non-Caste Hindus. If the Congress is obliged to choose only Caste Hindus or even Casteless Hindus, then it ceases to be Indian National Congress."

—*Press Message :* (Panchgani) June 20, 1945.

I would use my influence with the members of the Working Committee and give reasons for acceptance of his proposal and I have no doubt that, if both parties to the proposal correctly represent their constituents and have independence of India as their common goal, things must shape well.

At this point, I must stop and the Working Committee has to take up the thread. It is for its members to declare the Congress mind on the impending questions.

PARITY PROPOSAL

"The Congress has never identified itself with Caste or non-Caste Hindus and never can, even to gain independence, which will be one-sided, untrue and suicidal. The Congress, to justify its existence for winning independence of India, must remain for ever free to choose the best men and women from all classes, and I hope always will."

The following two extracts pertaining to the Parity proposal contained in the Wavell Plan[1] *for Interim National Government are taken from Gandhiji's telegrams to the Viceroy of June* 17 *and* 18, 1945, *respectively:*

I

If fixity of parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims is unchangeable, religious divisions will become officially stereotyped on eve of independence. Personally, I can never subscribe to it nor can Congress, if I know its mind. In spite of having overwhelmingly Hindu membership, Congress has striven to be purely political. I am quite capable of advising Congress to nominate all non-Hindus. You will quite unconsciously, but equally surely, defeat the purpose of the Conference if parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims is unalterable. Parity between Congress and League understandable. I am eager to help you and the British people, but not at the sacrifice of fundamental and universal principles. For, it will be no help.

II

My objection to inevitability of parity between Muslims and Caste Hindus stands. If that view is incapable of being altered by the British Government, my advice to Congress will be not to participate in the formation of an Executive Council. The Congress has never identified itself with Caste or non-Caste Hindus and never can, even to gain independence, which will be one-sided, untrue

[1] See *Appendix*—X.

and suicidal. The Congress, to justify its existence for winning independence of India, must remain for ever free to choose the best men and women from all classes, and, I hope, always will. That it has for the sake of conciliating minorities chosen men to represent them though they have been less than best, redounds to its credit; but that can never be pleaded to justify or perpetuate distinction based on caste or creed. The Hindu Mahasabha is the body claiming to represent solely Hindu interests.

HOPES ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

"While I cannot tell you what exactly the situation in the Conference is, I can only share with you my hope and prayer that things will come right both for India and Great Britain. I say for both, because I do not know that even if a settlement is pulled through, it *will* be on the right lines."

The following is an account of the interview that Mr. Preston Grover of the 'Associated Press of America' had with Gandhiji at Simla on June 29, 1945:

In one of the few interviews he has granted in recent months, Mahatma Gandhi said to-day that it was his "hope and prayer" that there would be a happy outcome of the Conference meeting here in an effort to form an interim, nationally-based Government. He expressed these views even as the Conference seemed to have reached an *impasse* that threatened a collapse.

The interview was informal, chatty and merry as are almost all interviews with this strangely influential little man. He sat on a pad on the floor in Manorville, the house of his friend Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. A chair was provided for me. It was the same sort of arrangement in which I interviewed him more than three years ago, not long before he was trundled off to imprisonment.

In the interview, he made these points:

(1) The Congress is not a communal body and can never become a sectional organization.

(2) The Congress is the only organization that has "tried to think and act in terms of the whole nation."

(3) The Congress entered these negotiations with the hope of setting up an Interim Government which would be the first step towards independence.

(4) If Mr. Jinnah wants Mahatma Gandhi to attend the Conference, he can make Mahatma Gandhi do so.

(5) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru "is my heir."

In reply to my questions, Mahatma Gandhi said he was feeling well and that the 7,000 feet altitude of Simla had not affected him so far, although he was watchful that he did not overstrain his heart.

Answering my initial request that he should give a report on the negotiations as they stood at the moment, he said: "I wish I could. But I am here only as an adviser. I have for years been advising the Congress. But now, I have constituted myself both adviser to the Congress and adviser, too, to the Viceroy, and through him to the British people. You see that makes my position exceptionally delicate. The only information I have is what my colleagues bring when they come to me. Frankly speaking, I do not know what the position at the Conference exactly is to-day. It has never been my habit to pry out of curiosity."

It was suggested that the Congress representatives kept him advised almost hourly, to which he replied: "They do and they do not. Unless the Viceroy wanted my advice, I would know nothing as to what was happening at that end.

"On our side, too, while they do come to me, it need not be from day to day or hour to hour. While, therefore, I cannot tell you what exactly the situation in the Conference is, I can only share with you my hope and prayer that things will come right both for India and Great Britain. I say for both, because I do not know that even if a settlement is pulled through, it *will* be on the right lines.

"But I give you a tip. I was not joking when I made the statement some time back in answer to Sir Feroz Khan Noon at San Francisco that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is my heir. He has got ability, knowledge and close touch with the public here and can interpret India's mind. "I have already, as I wrote to Lord Linlithgow, taken him as my guide in international affairs. He can interpret India's mind to the outside world as no one else can."

Sir Feroz Khan Noon's comment to which Mahatma Gandhi referred was the suggestion that Mahatma Gandhi should retire and allow Pandit Nehru to take over leadership.

Reverting again to the Conference, Mahatma Gandhi continued: "This much I can say, the Congress can never become a sectional organization. Not that there are not communal-minded people in it, but the Congress can

never work communally. Therefore, normally speaking, the parity principle should be distasteful to everybody."

Turning to the composition of the Conference, he declared that it was "political in its complexion" and not communal. This was in direct contradiction to the Muslim League argument that the whole Conference was chosen on a communal basis.

"If they wanted various groups to be represented communally," Mahatma Gandhi continued, "they should have invited the Hindu Mahasabha and not the Congress which has always been and now is a purely political body, trying to think and act in terms of the whole nation. It cannot belie its entire history at this critical moment."

Asked if the acceptance of the invitation to work for an Interim Government was in the belief that it was a step towards independence, Mahatma Gandhi replied that "the acceptance of the invitation was recognition of the fact that it was a step towards independence." But he added that this was "subject to explanation and clarification of what was in the Viceroy's mind. It was like sitting on top of a volcano which might erupt. I took that risk."

Toward the end of the interview, it was suggested that Mr. Jinnah was reported to be somewhat resentful that Mahatma Gandhi had withdrawn from the Conference.

"If Mr. Jinnah wants me there, he can take me there," said Mahatma Gandhi smiling widely. "We shall both go arm in arm. He can help me up the hill and save strain on my heart."

He added that such a gesture on Mr. Jinnah's part "would mean that he wants a settlement even in the teeth of differences and obstacles that face the Conference. You can tell him that I am quite willing to be taken to the Conference by him."[1]

I suggested that not only Mr. Jinnah, but Lord Wavell, most of India and all observers at the Conference

[1] For Mr. Preston Grover's interview with Jinnah Sahib in this connection and the latter's reaction to Gandhiji's suggestion, see *Appendix*—XII.

looked upon him as the head of the Congress regardless of the technicality that he was not a member, and that no settlement would be reached without his consent.

"That is both right and wrong," Mahatma Gandhi replied. "That impression has been created because generally my advice is accepted. But technically and substantially it is wrong. The Conference is legally representative and, therefore, I can have no place in it."

To my insistence that his was the controlling voice in the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi replied: "Not even that. They can shunt me out at any time, brush aside my advice. If I tried to override them, I might succeed for once. But the moment I try to cling to power I fall, never to rise again. That is not in my temperament."

DESAI-LIAQUAT ALI FORMULA

"There never was the slightest intention on the part of Advocate Bhulabhai Desai, on whose behalf alone I can speak, of 'stabbing the Congress in the back' or making an attempt to 'by-pass' the Congress."

Q. According to Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the Desai-Liaquat Formula contemplated formation of a new government first, to be followed by the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee. This aspect of the Formula has been interpreted by some people as "by-passing the Congress" and by some others as "stabbing the Congress in the back."

You have stated in your statement issued from Panchgani[1] that you blessed the Formula, as you thought it provided a basis for communal settlement. It is generally believed that you were consulted at every stage of the agreement. Is the interpretation put on the agreement, that it by-passed the Congress, correct?

A. I consider the question has been addressed to a wrong person. The parties to the Formula are the best persons to say what it meant. Then, what you put into Dr. Pattabhi's mouth, he may repudiate. I, therefore, suggest to all reporters at all times, but most specially at this time, to be precise and accurate in what they say. There never was the slightest intention on the part of Advocate Bhulabhai Desai, on whose behalf alone I can speak, of 'stabbing the Congress in the back' or making an attempt to 'by-pass' the Congress. He, himself, made politically by the Congress, could never be guilty of any such intention, and, for me, I should be committing suicide if I could be a party to any such attempt. I can say this much for Advocate Bhulabhai Desai that the only intention he had was that of honourably resolving the deadlock and thereby serving the Congress. It would be wrong to say that I was 'consulted at every stage', but it would be strictly correct to say that Shri Bhulabhai Desai saw me more than once about the 'pact'.

[1] See Footnote to *The Simla Conference*, p. 166.

Asked whether the release of members of the Working Committee formed part of the agreement, whether it was agreed between the parties that the Muslim League alone should nominate the Muslim members of the new Government and whether in view of so many statements and counter statements on the subject, it would not be desirable to release the Formula for publication, Gandhiji said:

I think, in the foregoing, I have said as much as I could, consistently with the fact that the 'pact' has not seen the light of day. I wish that the parties had agreed to release it for publication.[1]

[1] The pact was subsequently released for publication on September 1, 1945. For the terms thereof, see *Appendix*—XI.

OFFER TO JINNAH STILL STANDS

"I said and I repeat it now that my offer to Jinnah Sahib was not in the nature of a bargain. It was my settled conviction though originally derived from Rajaji."

In an interview to the Nagpur correspondent of a Madras paper, replying to a question whether his offer to Jinnah Sahib made in September, 1944, *still stood, Gandhiji said:*

I said and I repeat it now that my offer to Jinnah Sahib was not in the nature of a bargain. It was my settled conviction though originally derived from Rajaji. I am not in the habit of deriving anything from anybody, however great he may be, unless I can appropriate and assimilate it for myself. Therefore, even if Rajaji went back on that Formula, I shall stick to it so long as I retain my sanity. I hold it to be substantial and also directly derivable from Congress resolutions and immediately from the Resolution of August 1942. Only, I have given it a concrete shape.

CABINET MISSION'S STATEMENT

"If the promise inscribed on a promissory note is not honoured, the note is worth nothing and fit only to be torn to pieces and thrown away."

Not an Award

The Cabinet Delegation's announcement was published on Thursday the 16th.[1] The following day's discourse, therefore, naturally contained an examination of that document.

Taking as his text the song sung by Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani about "the land that was without sorrow and suffering," he proceeded to examine the Cabinet Mission's pronouncement in the light of the ideal set forth in that song. How far was the Cabinet Mission's pronouncement calculated to enable them to realize that ideal? "The poet says we are citizens of a country in which there is neither sorrow nor suffering. Where is such a country to be found in this world? I confess, throughout my wanderings I have not come across such a country so far. The poet has later described the conditions for the attainment of that ideal state. It is easy to observe them individually. For one who really and truly is pure at heart, there is no sorrow or suffering. But it is a difficult state for the millions to attain. Nevertheless we want India to be such a country." He had asked them on the previous day to examine independently of other people's opinions the Statement of the Cabinet Delegation when they saw it. They should examine it from the point of view of a country which would be without sorrow or suffering. He would give them his own reactions. He, however, did not want to contradict himself by asking them to follow his ideas if they did not appeal to them. Everyone should think for himself and herself. They were to weigh opinions and adopt only those they had assimilated.

[1] See *Appendix*—XIV.

He had glanced at the document casually on the previous night as soon as it was received. He had read it carefully in the morning. It was not an award. The Mission and the Viceroy had tried to bring parties together but they could not bring about an agreement. So they had recommended to the country what in their opinion was worthy of acceptance by the Constituent Assembly. It was open to that body to vary it, reject it or improve upon it. There was no 'take it or leave it' business about their recommendations. If there were restrictions, the Constituent Assembly would not be a sovereign body, free to frame a constitution of independence for India. Thus, the Mission had suggested for the Centre certain subjects. It was open to the Assembly, by the majority vote of Muslims and non-Muslims separately, to add to them or even reduce them. And it was open to the Assembly to abolish the distinction which the Mission had felt forced to recognize. Similarly, about grouping. The provinces were free to reject the very idea of grouping. No province could be forced against its will to belong to a group, even if the idea of grouping was accepted. He instanced only two things to illustrate his point. He had not exhausted the list of things which seemed to him to be open to objection or improvement.

Subject to the above interpretation, which he held was right, he told them that the Mission had brought forth something of which they had ever reason to be proud.

Spirit of C. F. A.

There were some, he proceeded, who said the English were incapable of doing the right thing. He did not agree with them. The Mission and the Viceroy were as God-fearing as they themselves claimed to be. It was beneath their dignity as men to doubt a person before he was proved to be untrue to his word. "The late Charlie Andrews was every inch of him an Englishman who had died slaving for India. It would be grievously wrong to doubt in advance everyone of his countrymen." What-

ever the wrong done to India by British rule, if the Statement of the Mission was genuine, as he believed it was, it was in discharge of an obligation which they had declared the British owed to India, namely, to get off India's back. It contained the seed to convert this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering.

The Announcement X-rayed

He had remarked in his previous day's address that he saw the germs of the realization of the ideal envisaged by the poet in the song that had been sung on that day, in the announcement of the Cabinet Mission. But it was subject to the condition that it meant what it said. He likened that announcement to a promissory note, whose worth depended entirely on its genuineness and validity. "If the promise inscribed on a promissory note is not honoured, the note is worth nothing and fit only to be torn to pieces and thrown away." Truth meant everything to him. He had said that he would not purchase even Swaraj at the cost of truth, because Swaraj so purchased would be illusory. It was his hope and prayer, in which he invited the audience to join him, that the announcement of the Cabinet Mission would be finally honoured in letter and in spirit and that God would help the members of the Mission to discharge their promissory note even as He had done for His devotees in days of old.

—*Pyarelal*

AN ANALYSIS

"We would grievously err if at this time we foolishly satisfy ourselves that the differences are a British creation. The Mission have not come all the way from England to exploit them. They have come to devise the easiest and quickest method of ending British rule."

After four days of searching examination of the State Paper issued by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government[1], my conviction abides that it is the best document the British Government could have produced in the circumstances. It reflects our weakness, if we would be good enough to see it. The Congress and the Muslim League did not, could not agree. We would grievously err if at this time we foolishly satisfy ourselves that the differences are a British creation. The Mission have not come all the way from England to exploit them. They have come to devise the easiest and quickest method of ending British rule. We must be brave enough to believe their declaration until the contrary is proved. Bravery thrives upon the deceit of the deceiver.

My compliment, however, does not mean that what is best from the British standpoint is also best or even good from the Indian. Their best may possibly be harmful. My meaning will, I hope, be clear from what follows.

The authors of the document have endeavoured to say fully they mean. They have gathered from their talks the minimum they thought would bring the parties together for framing India's charter of freedom. Their one purpose is to end British rule as early as may be. They would do so, if they could, by their effort, leave a united India not torn asunder by internecine quarrel bordering on civil war. They would leave in any case. Since, in Simla, the two parties, though the Mission succeeded in bringing them together at the Conference table

[1] See *Appendix*—XIV.

(with what patience and skill they could do so, they alone could tell), could not come to an agreement, nothing daunted, they descended to the plains of India, and devised a worthy document for the purpose of setting up the Constituent Assembly which should frame India's charter of independence, free of any British control or influence. It is an appeal and an advice. It has no compulsion in it. Thus, the Provincial Assemblies may or may not elect the delegates. The delegates, having been elected, may or may not join the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly having met may lay down a prodecure different from the one laid down in the Statement. Whatever is binding on any person or party arises out of the necessity of the situation. The separate voting is binding on both the major parties, only because it is necessary for the existence of the Assembly and in no otherwise. At the time of writing, I took up the Statement, re-read it clause by clause, and came to the conclusion that there was nothing in it binding in law. Honour and necessity alone are the two binding forces.

What is binding is that part of it which commits the British Government. Hence, I suppose, the four members of the British Mission took the precaution of receiving full approval of the British Government and the two Houses of Parliament. The Mission are entitled to warm congratulations for the first step in the act of renunciation which the Statement is. Since other steps are necessary for full renunciation, I have called this one a promissory note.

Though the response to be made by India is to be voluntary, the authors have naturally assumed that the Indian parties are well organized and responsible bodies, capable of doing voluntary acts as fully as, if not more fully than, compulsory acts. Therefore, when Lord Pethick-Lawrence said to a press correspondent: "If they do come together on that basis, it will mean that they will have accepted that basis, but they can still change it, if by a majority of each party they desire to do so," he was right in the sense that those who became delegates, well knowing the contents of the Statement, were ex-

pected by the authors to abide by the basis, unless it was duly altered by the major parties. When two or more rival parties meet together, they do so under some understanding. A self-chosen umpire (in the absence of one chosen by the parties, the authors constitute themselves one) fancies that the parties will come together only if he presents them with a proposal containing a certain minimum, and he makes his proposal, leaving them free to add to, substract from or altogether change it by joint agreement.

This is perfect so far. But what about the units? Are the Sikhs, for whom the Punjab is the only home in India, to consider themselves against their will, as part of the section which takes in Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier Province? Or, is the Frontier Province also against its will to belong to the Punjab, called "B" in the Statement, or Assam to "C" although it is a predominantly non-Muslim province? In my opinion, the voluntary character of the Statement demands that the liberty of the individual unit should be unimpaired. Any member of the sections is free to join it. The freedom to opt out is an additional safeguard. It can never be a substitute for the freedom retained in paragraph 15 (5) which reads:

> "Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common."

It is clear that this freedom was not taken away by the authors by Section 19 which 'proposes' (does not order) what should be done. It presupposes that the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, at its first meeting, will ask the delegates of the Provinces whether they would accept the group principle and if they do, whether they will accept the assignment given to their Province. This freedom inherent in every Province and that given by 15 (5) will remain intact. There appears to me to be no other way of avoiding the apparent conflict between the two paragraphs as also the charge of compulsion which would immediately alter the noble character

of the document. I would, therefore, ask all those who are perturbed by the group proposal and the arbitrary assignment, that, if my interpretation is valid, there is not the slightest cause for perturbation.

There are other things in the document which would puzzle any hasty reader who forgets that it is simply an appeal and an advice to the nation, showing how to achieve independence in the shortest time possible. The reason is clear. In the new world that is to emerge out of the present chaos, India in bondage will cease to be 'the brightest jewel' in the British crown. It will become the blackest spot in that crown, so black that it will be fit only for the dustbin. Let me ask the reader to hope and pray with me that the British crown has a better use for Britain and the world. The 'brightest jewel' is an arrogation. When the promissory note is fully honoured, the British crown will have a unique jewel as of right flowing from due performance of duty.

There are other matters outside the Statement which are required to back the promissory note. But I must defer that examination to the next issue of *Harijan*.

VITAL DEFECTS

"A nation that desires alien troops for its safety, internal or external, or has them imposed upon it, can never be described as independent in any sense of the term. It is an effete nation unfit for self-government."

Intrinsically and as legally interpreted, the State Paper seems to me to be a brave and frank document. Nevertheless, the official interpretation would appear to be different from the popular. If it is so, and prevails, it will be a bad omen. During the long course of the history of British rule in India, the official interpretation has held sway. And, it has been enforced. I have not hesitated before now to say that the office of the law-giver, judge and executioner is combined in one person in India. Is not the State Document a departure from the Imperialistic tradition? I have answered 'yes'.

Be that as it may. Let us try to glance at the short-comings.

The Delegation, after a brief spell in Simla, returned to Delhi on the 14th instant, issued their statement on the 16th, and yet we are far from the popular government at the Centre. One would have thought that they would have formed the Central Government before issuing the Statement. But they issued the Statement first and then set about the search for the formation of the Interim Government. It is taking a long time coming, whilst the millions are starving for want of food and clothing. This is defect No. 1

The question of paramountcy is unsolved. It is not enough to say that paramountcy will end with the end of British rule in India. If it persists without check during the interim period, it will leave behind a difficult legacy for the independent Government. If it cannot be ended with the establishment of the Interim Government, it should be exercised in co-operation with it and purely for the benefit of the people of the States. It is the people who want and are fighting for independence,

not the Princes who are sustained by the alien Power even when they claim not to be its creation for the suppression of the liberties of the people. The Princes, if they are true to their professions, should welcome this popular use of paramountcy so as to accommodate themselves to the sovereignty of the people envisaged under the new scheme. This is defect No. 2.

Troops, it is declared, are to remain during the interim period for the preservation of internal peace and protection against external aggression. If they are kept for such use during the period of grace, their presence will act as a damper on the Constituent Assembly and is more likely than not to be wanted even after the establishment of independence so-called. A nation that desires alien troops for its safety, internal or external, or has them imposed upon it, can never be described as independent in any sense of the term. It is an effete nation unfit for self-government. The acid test is that it should be able to stand alone, erect and unbending. During the interim period we must learn to hop unaided, if we are to walk when we are free. We must cease from now to be spoon-fed.

That these things are not happening as we would wish is to be accounted as our weakness, be the causes whatever they be, not the cussedness of the British Government or their people. Whatever we get, will be our desserts, not a gift from across the seas. The three Ministers have come to do what they have declared. It will be time to blame them when they go back upon the British declarations and devise ways and means of perpetuating British rule. Though there is ground for fear, there is no sign on the horizon that they have said one thing and meant another.

TO MUSLIM LEAGUERS

"The Muslim Leaguers have to-day raised the slogan that ten crores of Indian Muslims are in danger of being submerged and swept out of existence, unless they constitute themselves into a separate State. I call that slogan scare-mongering, pure and simple."

Q. How should the Hindu-Muslim question be tackled?

A. I must own defeat on that point. I know that mine is to-day a voice in the wilderness and yet I claim that mine is the only practicable solution. I can never subscribe to the view that because certain members of a particular community have indulged in inhuman acts, therefore the whole community may be condemned outright and put beyond the pale. The Muslim League may call Hindus names and declare India to be *Dar-ul-Harb*, where the law of *jehad* operates and all Muslims who co-operate with the Congress as Quislings fit only to be exterminated. But we must not cease to aspire, in spite of this wild talk, to befriend all Mussalmans and hold them fast as prisoners of our love. It would be a present possibility if Hindus in their lakhs offered themselves to be cut to pieces without retaliation or anger in their hearts. Non-violence is to-day rightly laughed out of court as Utopian. Nevertheless, I maintain that it is the only way to keep Hinduism alive and India undivided. The history of the Congress non-violence, for the last twenty-five years, has taught us nothing, if it has not taught us that.

The Muslim Leaguers have to-day raised the slogan that ten crores of Indian Muslims are in danger of being submerged and swept out of existence, unless they constitute themselves into a separate State. I call that slogan scare-mongering, pure and simple. It is nonsense to say that any people can permanently crush or swamp out of existence one-fourth of its population, which the Mussalmans are in India. But I would have no hesitation in conceding the demand of Pakistan, if I could be con-

vinced of its righteousness or that it is good for Islam. But I am firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forth by the Muslim League is un-Islamic and I have not hesitated to call it sinful. Islam stands for the unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family. Therefore, those who want to divide India into possibly warring groups are enemies alike of India and Islam. They may cut me to pieces, but they cannot make me subscribe to something which I consider to be wrong.

ADVICE TO ASSAM

"If we think independence is going to descend on our heads from England or somewhere, we are greatly mistaken. It won't be independence. We will be crushed to atoms. We are fluctuating between independence and helpless dependence. The Cabinet Mission's Plan lies in between. If we act rightly there will be the full-blown flower of independence. If we react wrongly, the blossom will wither away."

The following is an account of an interview given by Gandhiji to two Assam Congressmen who saw him on behalf of Shri Gopinath Bardoloi, the Premier of Assam, on December 15, 1946, *in connection with the situation created by* H. M. *Government's Statement of December* 6, 1946[1]:

Asked for guidance in regard to the question of Grouping, Gandhiji replied:

"I do not need a single minute to come to a decision, for, on this I have a mind. I am a Congressman to the very marrow, as I am mainly the framer of the constitution of the Congress as it stands to-day. I told Bardoloi that if there is no clear guidance from the Congress Committee, Assam should not go into the sections. It should lodge its protest and retire from the Constituent Assembly. It will be a kind of *satyagraha* against the Congress for the good of the Congress.

"Rightly or wrongly, the Congress has come to the decision that it will stand by the judgment of the Federal Court. The dice are heavily loaded. The decision of the Federal Court will go against the Congress interpretation of Grouping, as far as I can make out, for the simple reason that the Cabinet has got legal advice which upholds their decision.

"The Federal Court is the creation of the British. It is a packed court. To be consistent, the Congress must abide by its decision whatever it may be. If Assam keeps quiet, it is finished. No one can force Assam to do what it does not want to do. It is autonomous to a large extent to-day.

[1] See *Appendix*—XVI.

"It must become fully independent and autonomous. Whether you have that courage, grit and the gumption, I do not know. You alone can say that. But if you can make that declaration, it will be a fine thing. As soon as the time comes for the Constituent Assembly to go into sections you will say, "Gentlemen, Assam retires." For the independence of India it is the only condition. Each unit must be able to decide and act for itself. I am hoping that in this, Assam will lead the way.

"I have the same advice for the Sikhs. But your position is much happier than that of the Sikhs. You are a whole province. They are a community inside a province. But I feel every individual has the right to act for himself just as I have."

Q. "But we are told that the framing of the constitution for the whole of India cannot be held up for the sake of Assam. Assam cannot be allowed to block the way."

A. "There is no need to do that. That is why I say I am in utter darkness. Why are not these simple truths evident to all after so many years? If Assam retires, it does not block, but leads the way to India's independence."

Q. "The British Government has said that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly cannot be imposed on unwilling units. So, if some parts do not accept it, the British Parliament won't accept it."

A. "Who is the British Government? If we think independence is going to descend on our heads from England or somewhere, we are greatly mistaken. It won't be independence. We will be crushed to atoms. We are fluctuating between independence and helpless dependence. The Cabinet Mission's Plan lies in between.

"If we act rightly there will be the full-blown flower of independence. If we react wrongly, the blossom will wither away. Mind you, the League standpoint is quite correct. If they stand out, the Constituent Assembly cannot impose its constitution on an unwilling party. The British Government has no say in the matter, one way or the other.

"The British cannot interfere with the working of the Constituent Assembly. Supposing the vast majority, including the Muslims and others form a constitution, you can defy the British Parliament if it seeks to interfere. Power is in your hands. Some such thing happened in Ireland only recently. And De Valera is no non-violent fighter. The position of India is far better than that of Ireland. If we have not the penetration, we will lose the advantage we have, as it is apparently being lost to-day.

"If Assam takes care of itself, the rest of India will be able to look after itself. What have you got to do with the constitution of the Union Government? You should form your own constitution. That is enough. You have the basis of a constitution all right even now.

"I have never despised the 1935 Constitution. It is based on provincial autonomy. It has the capacity for fullest growth, provided the people are worth it. The hill people are with you. Many Muslims are also with you. The remainder can be too, if you act on the square.

"You will have to forget petty jealousies and rivalries and overcome your weaknesses. Assam has many weaknesses as it has much strength, for I know my Assam."

"With your blessings we can even go outside the Congress and fight," the Assam Congressmen interposed.

Gandhiji replied that in 1939 when there was the question of giving up the Ministry, Subhas Babu opposed it as he thought Assam's was a special case. "I told Bardoloi that there was much in what Subhas Babu had said and although, I was the author of that scheme of boycott, I said: 'Assam should not come out if it did not feel like it.' But Assam did come out. It was wrong."

The Assam Congressmen said that the Maulana Sahib had then said that exception could not be made in the case of Assam.

Gandhiji replied: "Here there is no question of exception. Assam rebelled and that civilly. But we have that slavish mentality. We look to the Congress and then feel that if we do not follow it slavishly, something will go wrong with it. I have said that not only a province but even an individual can rebel against the Congress

and by doing so save it, assuming that he is in the right. I have done so myself. Congress has not attained the present stature without much travail.

"I remember in 1918, I think, there was the Provincial Conference of the Congress workers of Gujarat at Ahmedabad. The late Abbas Tyabjee Sahib was in the chair. All the old guards were there. The Ali Brothers had not yet joined hands with me fully then, as they did later on. The late Shri Vitthalbhai Patel was there, and I moved the non-co-operation resolution. I was a nonentity then. A constitutional question arose. Could a Provincial Conference anticipate the decision of the Congress? I said "yes." A Provincial Conference and even a single individual could anticipate the Congress for its own benefit. In spite of opposition of the old hands, the resolution was carried. That paved the way for the Congress to pass a similar resolution at Calcutta. India was dumbfounded at the audacity of a Provincial Conference passing the revolutionary resolution.

"We had formed a *Satyagraha Sabha* outside the Congress. It was joined by Horniman, Sarojini Devi, Shankarlal, Umar Sobhani and Vallabhbhai. I was ill. The Rowlatt Act was passed. I shook with rage. I said to the Sardar I could do nothing unless he helped me. Sardar was willing. And the rest you know. It was rebellion, but a healthy one. We celebrate the 6th of April to the 13th. You have all these historical instances before you.

"I have given you all this time to steel your hearts, to give you courage. If you do not act correctly and now, Assam will be finished. Tell Bardoloi, I do not feel the least uneasiness. My mind is made up. Assam must not lose its soul. It must uphold it against the whole world. Else I will say that Assam had only manikins and no men. It is an impertinent suggestion that Bengal should dominate Assam in any way."

Asked if they could tell the people that they have rebelled against the Congress with Gandhiji's blessings, Gandhiji said: "Talk of God's blessings. They are much richer. Tell the people even if Gandhi tries to dissuade us, we won't listen."

NO GROUPING UNDER COMPULSION

"I see no contradiction between my aim and my advice to the people of Assam, the Sikhs and, for that matter, the Frontier Province and those who felt like it, to stay out of the Groups or from the Constituent Assembly."

Addressing the prayer gathering at Ramdevpur (Noakhali), Gandhiji referred to the advice he had given to Assam on the issue of Grouping and said:

"I see no contradiction between my aim and my advice to the people of Assam, the Sikhs and, for that matter, the Frontier Province and those who felt like it, to stay out of the Groups or from the Constituent Assembly. Why should Assam he absorbed in Bengal against its will, or the Frontier Province or the Sikhs into the Punjab and Sind? The Congress or the League, as the case may be, should make its programme and policy intrinsically attractive so as to appeal to the reason of the recalcitrant Provinces or Groups."

Gandhiji hoped that the Muslim League would join the Constituent Assembly[1] in which it was open to it to make good its position by an appeal to reason. Otherwise, the Constituent Assembly, because it was a voluntary organization brought into being by the only party that had force behind it, was like a house of cards. It could become a solid structure only if it was backed by the opinion of the Indian masses. Staying out by certain Provinces or Groups could not and should not be a hindrance to the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, if it was otherwise good.

[1] The All-India Congress Committee by its Delhi Resolution had accepted the Dec. 6 1946, Statement of the British Government and had gone to its farthest limit, consistent with its principles, to declare its friendly attitude to the Muslim League. Gandhiji could not say what would be League's attitude to this friendly gesture, but he could only hope that they would reciprocate—*Press Report*: Jan. 14, 1947.

FROM AFTER-PRAYER DISCOURSES

"Hindus and Muslims should live side by side. Pakistan or any '*stan*' did not mean that one would have to look upon another as an enemy."

League's Incitement to Violence Deplored

In his after-prayer speech to-day, Gandhiji said that it had hurt him to hear some of the recent pronouncements of the Qaid-e-Azam and his lieutenants. They go on saying that they will take what they want by force. He wondered where this was going to lead the ship of State. The Congressmen may have had the reins of power come into their hands, but this has only increased their duties and responsibilities a hundredfold. While the Congress was in the wilderness they were arrested, beaten and punished, even killed, but that is past history for the time being at any rate. If the Congress had resorted to violence, they would have fallen. The only true suffering is that which does not retaliate and it alone can bear fruit. Moreover, the 40 crores of India, *i.e.*, Village India did not think in terms of violence. They were slaves. The violence to-day was in the hearts of a handful of towns-people. Gandhiji said that as a villager he became one with the ocean of Indian humanity and the Congress had taken office for the sake of this suffering humanity.

He had espoused the Hindu-Muslim cause long before he joined the Congress. Even as a boy at school, he had many Muslim friends. He went to South Africa as a humble servant in charge of a case for Muslim friends of his brother. He went to South Africa to earn his living, but he soon put service first. He became a coolie barrister in order to serve his labourer friends there and he really served Hindus through Muslims whose employee he was. Hindu-Muslim unity had, therefore, become part of his very being. The memory of those days, Gandhiji said, was full of fragrance for him.

Even to-day, although alas! communal differences have raised their head there too, all were fighting as one

man for Indian rights. He recalled stalwart Muslims who had joined the *satyagraha* movement especially Seth Cachalia, who said he would rather die than remain a slave. Gandhiji, therefore, wondered and was hurt when Qaid-e-Azam and his disciples called Hindus their enemies.

Gandhiji said he was not a Muslim, but he claimed that Islam did not teach enmity to any man. If he was, as he believed, a true Hindu, he was equally a good Christian and a good Sikh and a good Jain. No religion taught man to kill fellow man because he held different opinions or was of another religion, and yet that was what was being done. No one could look upon another as his enemy unless he first became his own enemy.

The Muslim League leaders talked of forcing the Congress and the Hindus and even the British to yield to their demands. That surely was not the right way. He recalled with pride the days of the *Khilafat* and related the incident when the Ali Brothers wept tears of joy. Gandhiji was addressing a meeting of Hindus and said to them: "If you want to save the cow you must save the *Khilafat*, die for it if need be." That brought tears of joy to the eyes of the Ali Brothers. But what a sad change was there to-day! He longed for those days when Muslims and Hindus never did anything without consulting each other. What could he do to bring that state of affairs back again was the question that was worrying him all the time. He made bold to say that for any Hindu or Mussalman to regard the other community as 'enemy' was not only disloyal, but stupid too.

He appealed to Englishmen, too, not to imagine that they could keep the Hindus and Muslims apart. If they did, they were disloyal to both India and Britain. Hindus and Muslims were all sons of the same soil, blood brothers who ate the same food, drank the same water and talked the same language. They had to live together. The Qaid-e-Azam said, all minorities would be safe in Pakistan. There was already Muslim Raj in the Punjab, Bengal and Sind. But did it augur well for future peace if things happened in these provinces as threatened? Did the Muslim League imagine they were going to keep Islam alive through

the sword? If so, they were much mistaken. The very word Islam meant peace. And Gandhiji maintained that no religion worthy of the name could exist except on terms of peace.

—*New Delhi*: Sept. 7, 1946.

Nehru-Jinnah Talks

Gandhiji's message was read at the prayer meeting this evening, Monday being his silence day. The message said that he had only one request to make. Conversations were going on between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Jinnah Sahib which led one to hope that the Muslim League would join the Cabinet. He wanted all to pray that this time the union between the Congress and the Muslim League would be even deeper and more lasting than in 1916 and during the *Khilafat* movement, and that brother would no longer abuse or kill brother and all would live at peace.

—*New Delhi*: Oct. 7, 1946.

Congress-League Unity Essential

Addressing the gathering after the prayer to-day evening, Gandhiji said that he regretted that he was unable straightway to give them a translation of the Bengali *bhajan* of Gurudev[1] which they had heard at the prayer. He hoped to be able to do so the next day.

He, then, went on to say that if they wanted peace from the depths of their hearts and had faith in God, they should all pray earnestly that the Congress and Muslim League negotiations may end successfully so that those who were to-day behaving as barbarians may be brought back to civilization. Whatever way of life Europe or any other part of the world followed, he never wanted Indians to sink to the level of the brute.

He said he could not give them any news at the time, nor could anyone tell what the future held in store. It may be that God wanted them to suffer more. If that was their lot, they must endure it. But they should re-

[1] Poet Rabindranath Tagore.

member that the actions of man were significant of the condition of his mind. The audience before him were a mere drop in the ocean of Indian humanity, but if everyone wanted to live at peace with his brother, the Congress and Muslim League had to come together.

It was true that the Viceroy had to take orders from the British Cabinet in England, but all the same he was an autocrat. Their leaders, however, were the people's men, who had to do the people's will. Therefore, Gandhiji exhorted them all to pray to God to purge their minds of all anger and hatred and give wisdom to the leaders so that India may have unity and freedom.

Once they ceased to quarrel and kill each other, they would be free, and in independent India there was much to be done. To-day, they were foodless and naked: bribery and corruption and blackmarketing were rife. All these must go and then they could get together and build the new order that they wanted in India.

—*New Delhi*: Oct. 8, 1946.

Have Faith in God

At the prayer meeting in Bhangi Colony this evening Gandhiji, in accordance with his promise, read out a Hindustani translation of Gurudev's Bengali hymn which had been sung on an earlier occasion. The following is an English version of the hymn:—

I do not crave freedom from pain,
My prayer is that I may not be afraid of it,
If my anguished heart is without comfort,
I only pray that I may be enabled to gain the victory over sorrow and suffering.

Let me not lose courage even if I am without help,
If success and high position in life are denied me,
Let not my mind be disturbed.
I do not crave that thou shouldst carry me across the ocean of life,

I only ask for the strength to steer my own barque.

In days of sunshine let me bow my head in utter humility and thereby know Thee,
In the dark night of sorrow where the whole world deserts me,
Let me not lose for one moment my faith in Thee.

Gandhiji asked them to pray as Gurudev in his inimitable language had taught them in the *bhajan*. It was the faith of the devotee Prahlad that was needed.

New Delhi: Oct. 10, 1946.

A Word to the Muslim League

In the course of his speech after the evening prayers to-day, Gandhiji appealed to the Muslim League, too, to turn the searchlight inward. They had decided to come into the Interim Government. He hoped they were coming in to work as brothers. If they did, all would be well. And just as he had exhorted Hindus not to slay Mussalmans nor harbour ill-will towards them, so he appealed to the Muslim League, even if they wanted to fight for Pakistan, to fight cleanly and as brothers. The Qaid-e-Azam had said that minorities would be fully protected and everyone would receive justice in Pakistan. It was as good as Pakistan where they were in the majority, and he implored them to treat Hindus as blood brothers and not as enemies. It boded ill for Pakistan if what was happening in East Bengal was an earnest of things to come. He hoped both Hindus and Muslims respectively would stand mutually as surety and pledge themselves to see that not a hair of the head of the minority community in their midst was injured. Unless they learnt to do that, he would say that their assumption of the reins of power was a mere blind. What was going on in Bengal was not worthy of human beings. They had to learn to be human beings first.

—*New Delhi*: Oct. 15, 1946.

NOT STRAIGHT

Gandhiji's hope that the coming of the Muslim League into the Interim Government would prove to be a good augury was, however, destined soon to receive a rude shock by the inclusion of a Scheduled Caste name in the list of the Muslim League's nominees. It might be supposed, Gandhiji remarked after the evening prayer to-day, that a man like himself ought to be glad that another seat had been given to a Harijan. But he would be deceiving himself and Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah if he said so. The latter had said that the Muslims and Hindus were two nations. The League was a purely communal organization. How, then, could they nominate a Harijan to represent them? Gandhiji feared their whole mode of entrance into the Cabinet had not been straight. He could not sense any generosity in the nomination of a Harijan in their quota of five seats especially when he read what was happening in East Bengal. He was, therefore, forced to wonder whether they had come into the Cabinet also to fight.[1] He hoped, nevertheless, that

[1] *The following is taken from the text (as published by the Associated Press of America) of an interview which Gandhiji gave to Mr. Preston Grover on October* 21, 1946 *at the Sweepers' Colony, New Delhi:*

Turning to the affairs of the Interim Government, Mahatma Gandhi regretted the statement of Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan, Muslim League selection for the Central Government. To Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan's statement that the League was going into the Interim Government to fight for Pakistan, Mr. Gandhi said:

"That is an extraordinary and inconsistent attitude. The Interim Government is for the interim period only and may not last long. While it is in office, it is there to deal with the problems that face the country—starvation, nakedness, disease, bad communications, corruption, illiteracy. Any one of these problems would be enough to tax the best minds of India. On these there is no question of Hindu or Muslim. Both are naked. Both are starving. Both wished to drive out the demon of illiteracy and un-Indian education.

"There is not much time to elapse between this Government and that to be set up by the Constituent Assembly. The time will be shortened if both apply their will to the completion of the work on the Constituent Assembly.

his fears would prove to be wrong and that they would work there as brothers, out to serve India as a whole. He hoped, too, that the Harijan member would prove a worthy son and servant of India.

—*New Delhi*: Oct. 16, 1946.

Mutual Slaughter No Good

Addressing the prayer gathering this evening, Gandhiji said that to make peace between quarrelling parties had been his vocation from his youth. Even while he practised as a lawyer, he tried to bring the contending parties together. Why could not the two communities be brought together? He was an optimist. He saw a fair ray of hope that peace might be established between the two communities. From them he only wanted this help: that they should pray with him that this mutual slaughter might stop and the two communities might really become one at heart. Whether India was to become divided or remain one whole, could not be decided by force. It had to be done through mutual understanding. Whether they decided to part or stay together, they must do so with goodwill and understanding. He could never be a party to anything which meant humiliation or loss of self-respect for anyone. Therefore, any peace to be substantial must be honourable, never at the cost of honour.

In this, he was only echoing the sentiment expressed to him by a prominent Muslim who had seen him. This

"The Constituent Assembly is based on the State Paper. That Paper has put in cold storage the idea of Pakistan. It has recommended the device of 'grouping' which the Congress interprets in one way, the League in another and the Cabinet Mission in a third way. No law-giver can give an authoritative interpretation of his own law. If, then, there is a dispute as to its interpretation, a duly constituted court of law must decide it."

"But if the Muslim League do not accept the court interpretation?"

"They cannot impose theirs on others. If they do, they put themselves in the wrong box. The alternative is to come to blows. We are all savages and come to blows often when we don't agree. Yet, we are all gentlemen. This is so whether in America or Europe."

friend had said: "We must reach our goal, whatever it might be —Pakistan or undivided India—without bloodshed or fighting. I go so far as to say that if it cannot be reached except through bloodshed and fighting amongst ourselves, it is not worth reaching."

—*Sodepur*: Nov. 1, 1946.

East Bengal Tour

After the evening prayers, Gandhiji said that Shaheed Saheb[1] (the Bengal Premier) wanted to accompany him on the East Bengal tour, but he was held up in Calcutta. He had sent Shamsuddin Sahib (the Labour Minister) instead. Shamsuddin Sahib had not come to spy upon him, but to ensure the Government help wherever it was required. He was hopeful that the tour would have a good effect and the Hindu-Muslim unity of the *Khilafat* movement would come back. In the *Khilafat* days, no one talked of dividing India. Now, they did so. But partitioning, even if it was desirable, could not be achieved through violence; even if it could be achieved, it could not be retained except by the goodwill of the people concerned. The Bengal Ministers had assured him yesterday that the Muslims did not believe in Pakistan through force.[2]

—*Sodepur*: Nov. 6, 1946.

[1] H. S. Suhrawardy.

[2] Addressing at Chaumuhani (East Bengal) the gathering at Gandhiji's prayers, composed of both the Hindus and the Muslims, Shamsuddin Sahib referred to the Bengal and Bihar riots and said that in that way there could neither be Hindustan nor Pakistan; only ignominy would be added to slavery. He asked the Muslims of Noakhali to undertake the responsibility of assuring Hindus of the safety of their life, honour and property. He urged the Muslims in East Bengal to repent for all that they had done towards the Hindus there. If they went on fighting, all the sacrifices that India had made so far to achieve independence would be lost for ever and British rule would continue.

Appealing to the Muslims, the Minister said that they could never achieve Pakistan by killing Hindus wherever Hindus were

Advice to Refugees

Addressing the gathering in the compound of Diwanji bari, Gandhiji advised people to go back to their villages. His intention was that Hindus and Muslims should live side by side. Pakistan or any '*stan*' did not mean that one would have to look upon another as an enemy.

—*Dattapara* (Noakhali): Nov. 10, 1946.

Servant of Both Communities

Addressing the audience after prayers, Gandhiji told them whether they believed him or not, he wanted to assure them that he was a servant of both the Hindus and the Muslims. He had not gone there to fight Pakistan. If India was destined to be partitioned, he could not prevent it. But he wished to tell them that Pakistan could not be established by force.

In the *bhajan* that they had just heard, the poet had likened God to the philosopher's stone. The proverbial philosopher's stone was said to turn iron into gold. That was not always desirable. For instance, if all the rails of the railway track were turned into gold by the touch of the stone, the trains would not be able to run over them. But the touch of God purified the soul. That was always desirable. That touchstone was within them all. All that he wished to tell his Muslim brethren was that whether they lived as one people or two, they should live as friends with the Hindus. If they did not wish to do so, they should say so plainly. He would in that case confess himself defeated.

—*Dattapara:* (Noakhali): Nov. 11, 1946.

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Shamsuddin Sahib assured the sufferers that the Bengal Government would help them with food and clothing and by rebuilding their houses and that the culprits would be punished.

—*Press Message*: Nov. 9, 1946.

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AN APPEAL TO MUSLIMS

Speaking at a public meeting Gandhiji said that it had been brought to his notice that in several places, while the local Mussalmans professed to be anxious that peace should be re-established, they were not prepared to do any thing for it or give any guarantee, unless the Muslim League leaders asked them to. Gandhiji recognizing the reasonableness of their suggestion referred to a statement of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah which he had read that morning. He did not like everything in that statement, but there were some things in it which should commend themselves to all. In that statement Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had said:

> "If the Mussalmans lose their balance and give vent to the spirit of vengeance and retaliation and prove false to the highest codes of morality and preachings of our great religion Islam, you will not only lose your title to the claim of Pakistan but also it will start a most vicious circle of bloodshed and cruelty, which will at once put off the day of our freedom and we shall only be helping to prolong the period of slavery and bondage."

He had further said:

> "We must prove politically that we are brave, generous and trustworthy....that in the Pakistan areas the minorities will enjoy the fullest security of life, property and honour just as the Mussalmans themselves, nay even greater."

He would like them, remarked Gandhiji, to ponder over that statement, if on examination they found that his quotation was correct. Murder, loot, arson, abduction and forcible marriages and forcible conversions could not but prolong India's slavery. If they kept on quarrelling among themselves, if they looked to the police and the military for protection, they would be inciting the third party to rule over them—(*Pyarelal*).

—*Shahpur* (Noakhali): Nov. 14, 1946.

APPEAL REITERATED

In his address after the prayer, Gandhiji reiterated what he said about Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah Sahib's message on the previous day. They should search their hearts and ask themselves if they had lived up to that message.

"So far as I know, Islam does not permit forcible conversion and atrocities on women. What good can a mere repetition of the *Kalma* do to one whose heart does not accept Islam? You should ask your leaders, therefore, whether you are to be friends with the Hindus or enemies and tell me. If you wish to be enemies, the Hindus should be asked to leave East Bengal. For myself, I have come to stay in East Bengal till there is reconciliation between the two."

—*Ramganj* (Noakhali): Nov. 15, 1946.

Barbarities Must Cease

Replying to a question by the Press correspondent to-day as to how he thought lasting peace could be achieved by his new plan, unless the Muslim League itself which, presumably, guided the majority of Muslim intelligentsia sincerely cooperated in creating such atmosphere by their words and deeds, Gandhiji said:

"My new plan does contemplate the necessity for lasting peace, sincere co-operation of the Muslim League in establishing friendly relations between the two communities, irrespective of the merits or otherwise of Pakistan."

Asked as to what was the guarantee that some months later this sort of calamity would not be repeated in places like Noakhali, where Hindus were in a minority, Gandhiji said: "The only real guarantee is to be sought in the personal courage of individuals. Everything else depends on it."

The next question asked was whether he should not advise people in those areas where one or two houses were Hindu and the rest Muslim, to migrate to areas inside a district where the Hindus were comparatively in larger numbers, so that in case of emergencies they could put up some sort of resistance if they did not believe in non-violence.

Gandhiji's reply was: "There is no such safety as you imagine in numbers in the imagined conditions. Migration is no remedy whilst there is hope of co-operation.

It will become a necessity when the majority party wishes it, if a clash is to be avoided.

All this is a matter of mutual adjustment, not arbitrary action. What is needed is that barbarities must cease, if we are to survive as a nation or two, or many free nations still living in friendly co-operation."

—*Srirampur* (Noakhali): Nov. 27, 1946.

Religious Intolerance

To-day's prayer meeting was marked by a sensation as a number of Muslims left as *Ramanama* was taken at the prayer. Addressing the gathering after prayer, Gandhiji said that he felt sorry that his Muslim brothers had left the prayer meeting. He thought there must be some reasons for their going away and said he was told that Muslims had left as *Ramanama* was being taken at prayer. He was told that Muslims did not like taking *Ramanama*, and for that also he was glad. That apprised him of the position where he stood to-day.

Muslims thought God could be called only by the name *Khuda*. Behind all that had happened in Noakhali in October last was that attitude of intolerance of others' religion. Hindus might be small in numbers, but they should know that *Ramanama* and the name of *Khuda* were the same. Europeans said God, Hindus said '*Rama*,' and others called God by many other names.

Gandhiji was told that in Pakistan everyone could follow any religion he liked, that no one would be obstructed in following his own religion. But what he had just seen here was something else. Hindus here were required to forget their Hinduism and call God as *Khuda*. All religions were equal, Gandhiji said. Religions were like leaves of the same tree. There was nothing to quarrel among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others.

—*Masimpur* (Noakhali): Jan. 8, 1947.

Jinnah's Karachi Speech Commended

At Parkote on 7th instant, Gandhiji said, he had read a speech delivered by Jinnah Sahib on the occasion of the

foundation laying ceremony of a Girls' High School in Karachi by his sister, Miss Fatima Jinnah.

During his after-prayer speech to-day, Gandhiji translated a portion of that speech in which Jinnah Sahib was reported to have said that Muslims should develop a high sense of responsibility, justice and integrity. He was also reported to have said that wrong was not to be imitated. If after consulting one's conscience, one felt that a contemplated action was wrong, one should never do it, irrespective of any consideration or influence. If people acted up to this, no one would be able to prevent them from attaining Pakistan.

Gandhiji said that as there was no question of force here, and as Pakistan was going to be established by the sterling qualities of character, everybody would welcome such a state, no matter by what name it was called.

No one could agree, he said, that loot, arson or forcible conversion, no matter where committed, could ever be supported by the awakened conscience of man.

Gandhiji referred to the fact that the celebration was in connection with a Girls' School and recalled that Jinnah Sahib had advised the Education Minister in Sind to launch a determined drive against illiteracy. Gandhiji said that in this lay the secret of future peace.

Literary education by itself did not carry one far, for there never had been any dearth of literate men having taken a strong course in life. What was needed was education for life. Man and woman, he continued, were two limbs of the social body, and if one limb was atrophied the whole body would suffer in consequence. It was, therefore, very unfortunate that our sisters should be left in darkness and ignorance. Hindu women joined the prayer in large numbers. Why should not Muslim girls, if not women, find it possible also to join the prayer? The obvious duty of the Hindu sisters, Gandhiji continued, was to go to their Muslim sisters purely in a spirit of service.

Addressing the men, Gandhiji said that they ought to remember Jinnah Sahib's advice and act up to it; for, that advice was not really for men of any particular commu-

nity. It was of universal significance. The qualities which he had advised people to develop were not combativeness, but a sense of justice and truth; and this implied that whenever justice was at stake, people ought to appeal to reason instead of taking recourse to barbarous methods of settling disputes, whether private or public.

—*Badalkote* (Noakhali): Jan. 18, 1947.

Way to Peace

Gandhiji, who was addressing his prayer meeting at Badalkote yesterday, said that a short while before the prayer a Muslim friend, at whose house Gandhiji had halted on his way to Badalkote, approached him and said that if there was a settlement between Jinnah Sahib and Gandhiji, peace would be established in our country. Gandhiji's answer was that he did not maintain illusions and he never ascribed to himself any superior powers. He had met Jinnah Sahib many times, as the people knew, and their meetings had been marked by nothing but friendliness, yet the results were of a negative character.

The fact was, Gandhiji continued, that leader was made by his followers. He reflected in a clearer manner the aspirations lying dormant among the masses. This was true not only of India, but of all the world. What he would, therefore, suggest to both the Hindus and the Muslims was that they should not look to the Muslim League or the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha for a solution of their daily problem of life. For that they should look towards themselves, and if they did that, then their desire for neighbourly peace would be reflected by the leaders.

Political institutions might be left to deal with specifically political questions, but how much did they know about the daily needs of individuals? If a neighbour was ailing, would they run to the Congress or the League to ask them what should be done? That was an unthinkable proposition.

—*Atakhora* (Noakhali): Jan. 19, 1947.

GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS

"How can your mission in Noakhali succeed without any agreement or understanding at the Centre?" asked a Muslim of Mahatma Gandhi after his prayer speech here on 22nd instant.

Gandhiji replied that the example of the Muslim residents of Sirondhi in terminating the fast undertaken by Bibi Amtul Salam[1] should bear testimony to the fact that the development of a good-neighbourly spirit among the villagers was independent of the Congress or the Muslim League. Gandhiji asked the questioner whether on his neighbour's falling ill or being otherwise in distress, it would not be ridiculous on his part to call for instructions from his political party.

"Let political organizations fight with each other in their own way in the Assemblies and Councils and Governmental affairs. To determine their mutual relations with neighbours and make their village life happy and peaceful must remain the absolute concern of the villagers themselves," said Gandhiji.

Another question put to Gandhiji was: "Who saved the lives of the surviving Hindus in Noakhali?"

"God," Gandhiji replied. "Even though any person might have become instrumental in saving the lives of his neighbours, it was God alone who instilled that good neighbourly feeling in him. To say that anybody saved so many lives of Hindus is sheer vanity which is incompatible with the spirit of God-fearing Muslims. If such vanity is nourished and grows in anybody's mind, God will not pardon him. It is absolutely God's concern to let anybody live or let anybody die. No mortal can take credit upon himself for saving life," Gandhiji concluded.

—*Paniala* (Noakhali): Jan. 22, 1947.

[1] Before Bibi Amtul Salam broke her fast of 24 days, there was a meeting of Muslim elders of the village (Sirondhi). The meeting decided to give an assurance that the minority here would be protected and that there would be no intolerance with regard to minority's religious practices.—*Press Report*: Jan. 20, 1947.

Fate of Pakistan

In his after-prayer address this afternoon, replying to the questions of some local Muslims as to what was his idea about Pakistan and what would be the fate of it in future, Gandhiji said that he had been working for the last 25 years with the idea that if a province or village or any individual wished to be free of bondage of others it could do so if it would pursue its aim with determination. If it worked with firm determination Gandhiji thought it would achieve real freedom in no time.

Taking for instance Bengal or any other province declaring freedom from any outside control, Gandhiji added, if either moved united and with brotherly feeling among the people, nobody could deter it from its freedom.

About the fate of Pakistan, Gandhiji said he would refer in this connection to the speech of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah at the opening ceremony of a *Madrassa* in Karachi.

Gandhiji reiterated that if such a State was established by sheer merit and so long as the qualities of truth and justice were emphasized as had been done by him nobody would raise any objection, call it Pakistan or by any other name. If the Muslims felt that in their contemplated Pakistan Muslims alone would be allowed to remain, Gandhiji thought he must say that it was something un-Islamic.

—*Paniala* (Noakhali): Jan. 22, 1947.

Muslim Leaguers' Questions

Some Muslim Leaguers put questions to Gandhiji at the prayer meeting on Jan. 22, 1947. The first question was:

"You said that Muslim majority provinces, if they so choose, had Pakistan already. What did you mean by this?

Gandhiji replied that he fully meant what he had said. Whilst there was outside power in India there was neither Pakistan nor Hindustan, but bare slavery was their

lot. And if anybody maintained that the measure of provincial autonomy they enjoyed was equal to independence, they were unaware of the contents of independence.

It was true that the British Power was certain to go. But if they could not patch up their quarrel and indulged in bloodbaths, a combination of powers was certain to hold them in bondage. Those powers would not tolerate a country so vast and populous as India and so rich in potential resources to rot away because of internal disturbances. Every country had to live for the rest.

The days when they could drag on a frog-in-the-well existence were gone even before the Congress had taken up Non-violent Non-co-operation as the official policy for the whole of India, that is before 1920, in Gujerat, under the chairmanship of the late Abbas Tyabji Sahib.

He (Gandhiji) had said that it was open even to one province to vindicate its position and become wholly independent of the British Power. Thus, supposing that following that prescription, Bengal alone became truly and completely independent, there would be complete Pakistan, of his definition in Bengal. Islam was nothing if it did not spell complete democracy.

Therefore, there would be one man one vote and one woman one vote irrespective of religion. Naturally, therefore, there would be a true Muslim majority in the province. Had not Mr. Jinnah declared that in Pakistan the minorities would, if possible, be even better off than the majority. Therefore, there would be no underdog.

The second question was: "How did your *ahimsa* work in Bihar?"

Gandhiji said that it did not work at all. It failed miserably. But if the reports received by him from responsible quarters were to be relied upon, the Bihar Government was making full amends.

The third question was: "Why were you silent about the eviction of Bengalis by the Assam Government?"

Gandhiji replied that he was not deliberately silent. The question was not new for him. When some years ago he went to Assam, he was taken to the very spot

where Muslims from Mymensingh had migrated and taken possession of vacant lands. He had then given his opinion, and held it even now, that it was not open to persons to usurp vacant land wherever it may be, that is, whether in their own province or in another. For him it was not a Hindu-Muslim question. What he had said was of universal application. If Assam attempted to evict lawful possessors, it would be guilty of crime against humanity. What he had heard was quite the contrary. But if there was a question of unlawful eviction, the Assam Government would not be above law and it was open also to the Bengal Government to vindicate the position of evicted Bengalis, here happening to be Muslims.

—*Paniala* (Noakhali): Jan. 26, 1947.

QUESTION BOX

Unity Inevitable

Q. Would not the march to full responsible government be more rapid, if the Muslims were taken along?

A. Of course, it would be. Personally, I do not want anything which the Muslims oppose. But I have faith that the solution of the Hindu-Muslim tangle will come much sooner than most people expect. I claim to be able to look at the whole position with a detached mind. There is no substance in our quarrels. Points of difference are superficial, those of contact are deep and permanent. Political and economic subjection is common to us. The same climate, the same rivers, the same fields supply both with air, water and food. Whatever, therefore, leaders, *Mahatmas* and *Maulanas* may say or do, the masses, when they are fully awakened, will assert themselves and combine for the sake of combating common evils.

The effect of the Socialist and Communist propaganda, too, is to bring the masses of both the communities together by emphasizing identity of interests. I have my differences with them, but I cannot withhold my admiration for their endeavour to demolish the superstition that keeps the different communities apart.

Confusion of Thought

Q. You will be responsible for a gross injustice if you persist in giving to India a majority Government with only 'safeguards' for the minorities. The latter ought to have an effective part in the actual government of the country.

A. You have evidently confused majority rule with Hindu rule implying that the Hindu majority is irremovable. The fact is that the majority in all the provinces is a mixed majority. The parties are not Muslims and Hindus; they are Congressmen, Independents, Muslim Leaguers, Muslim Independents, Labourites, etc. The Congress majority everywhere is a mixed majority and could be better balanced if there was no tension. The tension

is a distemper. A distemper can never be a permanent feature of any growing society which India is. Whatever the outcome of the Muslim League demonstration and its claim, some day or other there will be a solution of the issues raised. The outcome will never be pure Muslim or Hindu majorities in any single province. The parties will be mixed and aligned according to different policies, unless democracy is crushed and autocracy reigns supreme in India as a whole, or India is vivisected into two or more dead parts. If you have followed my argument, it must be clear to you that there will never be a denial of power to any party or group so far as the Congress is concerned. Minorities are entitled to full protection of their rights, for so long as they have to divide power with others, they run the risk of their special rights being adulterated.

Congress not Responsible

Q. Many people believe that the attitude of the Congress has precipitated the Muslim League Resolution (March 1940) about partitioning India.

A. I do not think so. But if it has, it is a distinct gain. It is good that what was in should come out. It is easier now to deal with the problem. It will solve itself. One distinct gain is that Nationalist Muslims have become awakened to a sense of their duty.

Self-Determination

Q. Are you right in conceding the right of self-determination to Muslims in a matter so vitally affecting others also, *viz.*, Hindus, Sikhs, etc.? Supposing the majority of the Muslims decide in favour of partition in terms of the Muslim League Resolution, what happens to the self-determination of Hindus, Sikhs, etc., who will be minorities in the Muslim States? If you go on like this, where will be the end to it?

A. Of course, Hindus and Sikhs will have the same right. I have simply said that there is no other non-violent method of dealing with the problem. If every component part of the nation claims the right of self-determination for itself, there is no one nation and there is no independence. I have already said that Pakistan

is such an untruth that it cannot stand. As soon as the authors begin to work it out, they will find that it is not practicable. In any case, mine is a personal opinion. What the vast Hindu masses and the others will say or do, I do not know. My mission is to work for the unity of all, for the sake of the equal good of all.

PARTITION AND NON-MUSLIMS

Q. You have said in *Harijan* that "if the eight crores of Muslims desire partition, no power on earth can prevent it." Does it not strike you that 25 crores of non-Muslims, too, might have a say in the matter? Does not your statement imply that you put a premium on the opinion of the Muslims while underrating that of the Hindus?

A. I have only given my opinion. If the majority of Hindus or Christians or Sikhs or even Parsis, small though their number is, stubbornly resist the express wish of the duly elected representatives of eight crores of Muslims, they will do so at the peril of a civil war. This is not a question of majority or minority. If we are to solve our problems non-violently, there is no other way. I say this not because the eight crores happen to be Muslims. I would say the same if the eight crores were any other community.

PAKISTAN AND AHIMSA

Q. I am a believer in *ahimsa* as well as Pakistan. How can I use the *ahimsa* principle for the realization of my ideal?

A. It is not possible to attain an iniquitous end by non-violent means. For instance, you cannot commit theft non-violently. As I understand Pakistan, I do not regard it as a worthy ideal. But since you consider it to be a worthy end, you can certainly carry on a non-violent movement on its behalf. This means that you will always strive to convert your opponents by patient reasoning. You will impress everybody by your selfless devotion to your ideal. You will give a respectful hearing to what your opponents might have to say, and respectfully point out to them their mistake if they are in the wrong. Finally, if you feel that the people do not listen to you out of

sheer bigotry and prejudice, although your cause is absolutely just, you can non-violently non-co-operate with the obstructionists. But you may not injure or seek to injure anybody and must, on your part, patiently endure any injury that might be done to you. All this you will be able to do if impartial persons endorse the justice of your cause.

What About Muslims?

Q. "But what does a free India mean, if, as Mr. Jinnah said, Muslims will not accept Hindu rule?

A. I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to the Hindus. Let them entrust India to God or, in modern parlance, to anarchy. Then, all the parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos.

Exchange of Population

Q. What do you say to the proposal for exchange of population?

A. The question of exchange of population has never crossed my mind. It is unthinkable and impracticable. Every province is of every Indian, be he Hindu, Muslim or of any other faith. It won't be otherwise even if Pakistan came in full. For me any such thing will spell bankruptcy of Indian wisdom or statesmanship, or both. The logical consequence of any such step is too dreadful to contemplate. Is it not bad enough that India should be artificially divided into so many religious zones?

Migration Policy

Q. In view of the unsettled situation, is it not better to adopt migration policy?"

A. I see nothing to warrant such a policy. It is one of despair and, therefore, to be adopted in rare cases and as a last resort.

SEPARATE MUSLIM STATE

Q. What is your objection to the establishment of a separate Muslim State after what has happened in Bihar?

A. I have no objection to a separate Muslim State. The question is what is going to be the character of that State. This point has not been made clear so far. If a Muslim State implies freedom to make unfriendly treaties with the foreign Powers to the detriment of the country as a whole, then obviously it cannot be a matter of agreement. No one can be asked to sign an agreement granting freedom to another to launch hostilities against himself; it would be a suicidal policy.

WHY NOT PAKISTAN FIRST?

Q. Will it not be better to concede Pakistan and get freedom for the whole of India?

A. When you think of establishing Pakistan first, you think in terms of getting it with the aid of a third power. When I think of freedom for India, I think in terms of achieving it without any foreign aid, be it Russian, Chinese or any other Power, but on the basis of inner strength. Then only that freedom will be real and lasting. Once freedom is secured for the country as a whole, then we can decide about Pakistan or Hindustan.

PAKISTAN OR CIVIL WAR?

Q. Which of the two alternatives for a solution of the present situation in India would be preferable—Pakistan or civil war?

A. I would approach the problem differently. Neither of the two suggested solutions would be good. It is wrong to think that Pakistan can be achieved through civil war.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX—I

Jinnah's Letter to Gandhiji

Bombay: January 21, 1940

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am in receipt of your letter of 16th January and the advance copy of the article you have sent to the *Harijan*. I not only thank you for your courtesy but also for your anxiety to further the end you have been reading in my messages and actions. I, however, regret to have to say that your premises are wrong as you start with the theory of an Indian nation that does not exist, and naturally, therefore, your conclusions are wrong. I should have thought, however, that you at least would not be led away by one-sided newspaper reports and canards. There is so much in your article which is the result of imagination. It is due partly to the fact that you are living a secluded life at Segaon, and partly because all your thoughts and actions are guided by "inner voice." You have very little concern with realities, or what might be termed by an ordinary mortal "practical politics." I sometimes wonder what can be common between practical politics and yourself, between democracy and dictator of a political organization of which he is not even a four-anna member. But that is, I suppose, because you do not consider the Congress worthy of your membership.

I am glad to learn that you were not ruffled by the "Deliverance Day" greetings sent to you from Gulbarga. It was indeed noble of you to join in the silent prayer "Long Live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah." Although these are trivial matters, I nevertheless appreciate that you have realized the true inward meaning and significance of the "Deliverance Day."

It is true that many non-Congress Hindus expressed their sympathy with the Deliverance Day in justice to our cause, so also the leaders of the Justice Party and the Scheduled Castes, and the Parsis who had suffered. But I am afraid that the meaning which you have tried to give to this alignment shows that you have not appreciated the true significance of it. It was partly a case of "adversity bringing strange bed-fellows together," and partly because common interest may lead Muslims and minorities to combine. I have no illusions in the matter, and let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being the two major

nations. To-day, you deny that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation, but you yourself, when asked what your motive in life was, "the thing that leads us to do what we do," whether it was religious, or social, or political, said: "Purely religious!" "This was the question asked me by the late Mr. Montagu when I accompanied a deputation which was purely political. 'How you, a social reformer,' he exclaimed, 'have found your way into this crowd?' My reply was that it was only an extension of my social activity. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The gamut of man's activities to-day constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing.'"

More than anyone else, you happen to be the man to-day who commands the confidence of Hindu India and are in a position to deliver the goods on their behalf. Is it too much to hope and expect that you might play your legitimate role and abandon your chase after a mirage? Events are moving fast, a campaign of polemics, or your weekly discourse in the *Harijan* on metaphysics, philosophy and ethics, or your peculiar doctrines regarding *Khaddar*, *ahimsa* and spinning are not going to win India's freedom. Action and statesmanship alone will help us in our forward march. I believe that you might still rise to your stature in the service of our country and make your proper contribution towards leading India to contentment and happiness.

Lastly, I thank you for your anxiety to respect my wishes in the matter of the prefix you should use with my name. What is in a prefix after all. A rose called by any other name smells just as sweet. So I leave the matter entirely to you, and have no particular wish in the matter. I really do not know why you are worried so much about it. I, however, notice that the present prefix you are using is according to the usage taught to you by the late Hakim Sahib. But surprisingly enough during his lifetime and till long after his death, you addressed me as "Mr.", then quite recently you addressed me as "Shree," and in between as "friend," but please do not bother about this matter.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. Jinnah

APPENDIX—II

Muslim League's Lahore Resolution (March 1940)

"It is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following

basic principles, *viz.*, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

"Adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the Constitution for them and other minorities, for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them. The session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of Constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as Defence, External Affairs, Communications, Customs and such other matters as may be necessary."

APPENDIX—III

Cripps' Proposals

The following proposals of the British Government were announced on March 30, 1942:

His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.

His Majesty's Government, therefore, make the following declaration:

(*a*) Immediately upon cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

(*b*) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for participation of Indian States in the constitution-making body.

(*c*) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to:

(*i*) The right of any Province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution, to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

(*ii*) The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. This treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands; it will make provision, in accordance with undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities, but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(*d*) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities:

Immediately upon the result being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion as to their total population, as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members.

(*e*) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the Defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

APPENDIX—IV

A. I. C. C. Resolution on Self-Determination

The following resolution moved by Shri Jagat Narain Lal was passed by the All-India Congress Committee on May 2, 1942, at Allahabad:

"The A. I. C. C. is of opinion that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal."

Giving permission for the resolution moved by Shri Jagat Narain Lal, the President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, gave it as his opinion that the resolution no way contradicted the position taken up by the Working Committee at Delhi with regard to the question of the demand for the partition of India made by the Muslim League and incorporated in the resolution dealing with Sir Stafford's draft proposals.[1]

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION ON NON-ACCESSION OF PROVINCES

[1] "The acceptance before hand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian States merging themselves in the Indian Union. The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless, the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognizing this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercized on other substantial groups within that area."—*Resolution of the Congress Working Committee dated April 2, communicated to Sir Stafford Cripps, and released to the Press on April 10, 1942.*

APPENDIX—V

"Quit India" Resolution (August 1942)

The following is the text of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee on the evening of August 8, 1942, *at Bombay:*

The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese people its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathize with the victims of aggression to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling Power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the War and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the War, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of to-day, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the War.

The A. I. C. C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a Provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The Provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The Provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all the sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any Colonial Power.

While the A. I. C. C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of Free Nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's

resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the War, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the War, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation. The reaction of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign Press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeoparadize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to the growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A. I. C. C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an Imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of

peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement, must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide, urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A. I. C. C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A. I. C. C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

APPENDIX—VI

The Rajaji Formula (July 8, 1944)

Basis for terms of settlement between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League to which Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour respectively to get the Congress and the League to approve:

(1) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a Provisional Interim Government for the transitional period.

(2) After the termination of the War, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the North-West and East of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State.

(3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.

(4) In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding Defence, and Commerce and Communications and for other essential purposes.

(5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.

(6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

APPENDIX—VII

Rajaji-Jinnah Correspondence

The following correspondence between Shri Rajagopalachari and Jinnah Sahib was released by the former for publication from Panchgani on 8th July, 1944:

New Delhi: April 8, 1944

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Here is the basis for a settlement which I discussed with Gandhiji in March 1943, and of which he expressed full approval. He then authorized me to signify his approval of these terms should I be able to convince you of their being just and fair to all. As the Government have refused to relax any of the restrictions imposed on him to enable him to discuss or negotiate terms of any settlement, I write this to you on his behalf and hope that this will bring about a final settlement of the most unfortunate impasse we are in. You are aware of the intensity of my desire for a settlement. I was very glad when I found it possible to obtain Gandhiji's approval of these terms. I hope that you will bestow your fullest thought on the justice and fairness of these proposals and help to terminate a condition of affairs which is steadily causing all-round deterioration in the country.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Enclosure: C. R. Formula.

Shri Rajagopalachari's Second Letter

New Delhi: April 17, 1944

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

The proposal I gave you in writing when we last met in Delhi must be still with you and perhaps you have read it over again and given further thought to it. I was much disappointed, as you are aware, at your inability to approve of the terms. But I hope you may perhaps reconsider your position. I sincerely believe that the proposals

form a fair and satisfactory basis of settlement. I shall be grateful to hear from you as to whether you have reconsidered the matter.

Yours sincerely,
C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

TELEGRAM FROM SHRI RAJAGOPALACHARI TO JINNAH SAHIB

Poona: June 30, 1944

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Guest House, Srinagar.

My letter dated April 17, touching matter personally discussed on April 8 remains yet unanswered. Have now met Gandhiji who still holds by Formula presented to you by me. I would like now publish the Formula and your rejection. This telegram is sent with Gandhiji's approval. I would like you at this juncture to reconsider your rejection.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI,
Dilkusha, Panchgani

TELEGRAM FROM JINNAH SAHIB TO SHRI RAJAGOPALACHARI

Srinagar: July 2, 1944

Mr. Rajagopalachari, Dilkusha, Panchgani.

Your request to publish your Formula. Your wrong version our talk that I rejected your Formula is unfair surprising. True facts are I was willing place your Formula before Working Committee Muslim League although it was not open to any modification, but you did not agree allow me to do so. Hence, no further step was taken. My reaction was that I could not personally take responsibility of accepting or rejecting it and my position remains same to-day. If Mr. Gandhi even now sends me direct his proposal, I am willing place it before Muslim League Working Committee.

M. A. JINNAH

TELEGRAM FROM SHRI RAJAGOPALACHARI TO JINNAH SAHIB

Panchgani: July 4, 1944

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Guest House, Srinagar.

Thanks telegram. My letter April 17 showed how I felt over what I thought was rejection of Formula so far as you were personally concerned. Shall be glad indeed if, as your telegram suggests, you did not reject it. Gandhiji, though not vested with representative or special authority in this matter, definitely approved my proposal and authorized me to approach you on that basis. Now again he reaffirms his assent. Weight of his opinion would most probably secure Congress acceptance. You were unwilling to accept my Formula, but were willing to place it before League Council. I think no purpose

served by such procedure so long as it does not have your own support.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI,
Dilkusha, Panchgani

TELEGRAM FROM JINNAH SAHIB TO SHRI RAJAGOPALACHARI

Srinagar: July 5, 1944

(*Received Panchgani, July* 8, 1944.)

Mr. Rajagopalachari, Dilkusha, Panchgani.

Regret unable to go beyond my telegram July 2.

M. A. JINNAH

TELEGRAM FROM SHRI RAJAGOPALACHARI TO JINNAH SAHIB

Panchgani: July 8, 1944

Mr. Jinnah, Guest House, Srinagar.

Your telegram of 5th received to-day. With it private negotiation ends. It is necessary take public into confidence now. I am accordingly releasing entire correspondence ending your wire 5th.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

APPENDIX—VIII

ASSURANCE TO DR. SHYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

The following account of an interview with Gandhiji at Sevagram was issued to the Press on August 6, 1944, *by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee* :

I had a long interview with Mahatmaji yesterday in my individual capacity and fully explained why I and those who think like me are so strongly opposing Mr. Rajagopalachari's Formula from the point of view of India as a whole. The discussion was full and frank. It is not necessary for me to publish at this stage the different points of view expressed. But there was clarification on some main principles which the public should know. They are, among others, as follows:

Gandhiji says that his association with the Rajaji Formula is personal and is meant to commit nobody but himself. He is, therefore, anxious that people should express their opinion freely and fearlessly. I gathered from our conversation that he welcomes such criticism, for he was open to conviction. If he discovered any flaw in the Formula, he would have no hesitation in correcting the error. In his opinion the Formula is intended to be just to all. If, therefore, any community was likely to be unjustly affected by the Formula being given effect to, the flaw should be brought to his notice. He was also anxious that people should remember that if an agreement was reached between Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and himself, it would be open to all parties to

advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held and the plan would come into effect only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility in the governance of India. There was, therefore, ample time for a calm and dispassionate discussion. He also said that the Rajaji Formula was a way of reducing to a concrete form the Congress resolution on self-determination and nothing could operate without the consent of all sections. This is not the gist of the whole conversation. That part of it only is given which is necessary to ease the public mind of the fear that any criticism of the Formula would weaken Gandhiji's influence or position. He assured me that he had always welcomed criticism and that he had flourished on it and that his influence could not be weakened by it. This is being published with Gandhiji's approval.

APPENDIX—IX

Gandhi-Viceroy Correspondence

The following correspondence that passed between Gandhiji and the Viceroy on Gandhiji's proposals for settlement of the Indian deadlock was released by the Government from New Delhi on August 17, 1944, *on the eve of the date originally fixed for the Gandhi-Jinnah talks:*

Gandhiji's Letter to Viceroy

Panchgani: July 15, 1944

Dear Friend,

You have no doubt seen the authentic copies now published in the Indian Press of the statements given by me to Mr. Gelder of the *News Chronicle*. As I have said to the Press, they were meant primarily to be shown to you. But Mr. Gelder, no doubt, with the best of motives gave the interview premature publicity. I am sorry. The publication will nevertheless be a blessing in disguise, if the interview enables you to grant at least one of my requests contained in my letter of June 17, 1944.

I am
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Viceroy's Reply

New Delhi: July 22, 1944

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of July 15. I have seen the statements you made to Mr. Gelder, and your subsequent explanation of them. I do not think I can usefully comment at present except to repeat what I said in my last letter that if you will submit to me a definite and constructive policy, I shall be glad to consider it.

Yours sincerely;
Wavell

Gandhiji's Proposals to Viceroy

Panchgani: July 27, 1944

Dear Friend,

I must admit my disappointment over your letter of the 22nd instant. But I am used to work in the face of disappointment. Here is my concrete proposal.

I am prepared to advise the Working Committee to declare that in view of the changed conditions, mass civil disobedience envisaged by the Resolution of August 1942, cannot be offered and that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian independence is made and a National Government responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that during the pendency of the War, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India. If there is a desire on the part of the British Government for a settlement, friendly talks should take the place of correspondence. But I am in your hands. I shall continue to knock so long as there is the least hope of an honourable settlement.

After the foregoing was written, I saw Lord Munster's speech in the House of Lords. The summary given by him in the House of Lords fairly represents my proposal. This summary may serve as a basis for mutual friendly discussion.

I am
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Viceroy's Reply to Gandhiji

New Delhi: August 15, 1944

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of July 27. Your proposals are:

1. That you should undertake to advise the Working Committee (*a*) "that in view of the changed conditions mass civil disobedience envisaged by the Resolution of August 1942, cannot be offered" and (*b*) "that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, provided that His Majesty's Government (*a*) declare immediate Indian independence, and (*b*) form a "National Government" responsible to the Central Assembly, "subject to the proviso that, during the pendency of the War, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India."

2. His Majesty's Government remain most anxious that a settlement of the Indian problem should be reached. But proposals such as those put forward by you are quite unacceptable to His Majesty's Government as a basis for discussion, and you must realize this if you have read Mr. Amery's statement in the House of Commons on July 28 last. They are, indeed, very similar to the proposals made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Sir Stafford Cripps in April 1942, and

His Majesty's Government's reasons for rejecting them are the same as they were then.

3. Without recapitulating all these reasons in detail, I should remind you that His Majesty's Government at that time made it clear:

(*a*) That their offer of unqualified freedom after the cessation of hostilities was made conditional upon the framing of a constitution agreed by the main elements of India's national life and the negotiation of the necessary treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government;

(*b*) that it is impossible during the period of hostilities to bring about any change in the constitution, by which means alone a "National Government," such as you suggest, could be made responsible to the Central Assembly.

The object of these conditions was to ensure the fulfilment of their duty to safeguard the interests of the racial and religious minorities and of the Depressed Classes, and their treaty obligations to the Indian States.

4. It was upon the above conditions that His Majesty's Government invited Indian leaders to take part in an Interim Government which would operate under the existing constitution. I must make it quite clear that until the War is over, responsibility for defence and military operations cannot be divided from the other responsibilities of Government, and that until hostilities cease and the new constitution is in operation, His Majesty's Government and the Governor-General must retain their responsibility over the entire field. So far as the question of India's share of the cost of the war is concerned, this is essentially a matter for settlement between His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Government of India on the other, and existing financial arrangements can only be reopened at the instance of one or the other.

5. It is clear, in these circumstances, that no purpose would be served by discussion on the basis which you suggest. If, however, the leaders of the Hindus, the Muslims and important minorities were willing to co-operate in a transitional government established and working within the present constitution, I believe good progress might be made. For such a transitional government to succeed there must, before it is formed, be agreement in principle between Hindus and Muslims and all important elements as to the method by which the new constitution should be framed. This agreement is a matter for Indians themselves. Until Indian leaders have come closer together than they are now, I doubt if I myself can do anything to help. Let me remind you, too, that minority problems are not easy. They are real and can be solved only by mutual compromise and tolerance.

6. The period after the termination of hostilities for which the transitional government would last would depend on the speed with which the new constitution could be framed. I see no reason why preliminary work on that constitution should not begin as soon as the Indian leaders are prepared to co-operate to that end. If they can

arrive at a genuine agreement as to the method of framing the constitution, no unnecessary time need be spent after the War in reaching final conclusions and in agreeing on treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government. There again, the primary responsibility rests on the Indian leaders.

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL

APPENDIX—X

VICEREGAL BROADCAST

Explaining his proposals for an Interim Government, Lord Wavell made the following broadcast on June 14, 1945:

Lord Wavell said:

I have been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place before Indian political leaders proposals designed to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government. These proposals are at the present moment being explained to Parliament by the Secretary of State for India. My intention in this broadcast is to explain to you the proposals, the ideas underlying them, and the method by which I hope to put them into effect.

This is not an attempt to obtain or impose a constitutional settlement. His Majesty's Government had hoped that the leaders of the Indian parties would agree amongst themselves on a settlement of the communal issue, which is the main stumbling-block, but this hope has not been fulfilled.

In the meantime, India has great opportunities to be taken and great problems to be solved, which require a common effort by the leading men of all parties. I therefore propose, with the full support of His Majesty's Government, to invite Indian leaders both of Central and Provincial politics to take counsel with me with a view to the formation of a new Executive Council more representative of organized political opinion. The proposed new Council would represent the main communities and would include equal proportions of Caste Hindus and Muslims. It would work, if formed, under the existing Constitution. But it would be an entirely Indian Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as War Member. It is also proposed that the portfolio of External Affairs, which has hitherto been held by the Viceroy, should be placed in charge of an Indian Member of Council, so far as the interests of British India are concerned.

A further step proposed by His Majesty's Government is the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India, as in the Dominions, to represent Great Britain's commercial and other such interests in India.

Such a new Executive Council will, you realize, represent a definite advance on the road to self-government. It will be almost entirely

Indian, and the Finance and Home Members will for the first time be Indians, while an Indian will also be charged with the management of India's Foreign Affairs. Moreover Members will now be selected by the Governor-General after consultation with political leaders, though their appointment will of course be subject to the approval of His Majesty the King-Emperor.

The Council will work within the framework of the present constitution, and there can be no question of the Governor-General agreeing not to exercise his constitutional power of control, but it will of course not be exercised unreasonably.

I should make it clear that the formation of this Interim Government will in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement.

Main Tasks

The main tasks for this new Executive Council would be:

First, to prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy till Japan is utterly defeated.

Secondly, to carry on the Government of British India, with all the manifold tasks of post-war development in front of it, until a new permanent constitution can be agreed upon and come into force.

Thirdly, to consider, when the Members of the Government think it possible, the means by which such agreement can be achieved. The third task is most important. I want to make it quite clear that neither I nor His Majesty's Government have lost sight of the need for a long-term solution, and that the present proposals are intended to make a long-term solution easier.

I have considered the best means of forming such a Council, and have decided to invite the following to Viceregal Lodge to advise me:

Those now holding office as Premier in a Provincial Government; or, for Provinces now under Section 93 Government, those who last held the office of Premier.

The Leader of the Congress Party and the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League in the Central Assembly; the leaders of the Congress Party and the Muslim League in the Council of State; also the leaders of the Nationalist Party and the European Group in the Assembly.

Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah as the recognized leaders of the two main political parties.

Rao Bahadur N. Shiva Raj to represent the Scheduled Classes.

Master Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs.

Invitations to these gentlemen are being handed to them to-day and it is proposed to assemble the Conference on June 25 at Simla where we shall be cooler than at Delhi.

I trust that all those invited will attend the Conference and give me their help. On me and on them will lie a heavy responsibility in this fresh attempt to make progress towards a final settlement of India's future.

If the meeting is successful, I hope that we shall be able to agree

on the formation of the new Executive Council at the Centre. I also hope that it will be possible for Ministries to reassume office and again undertake the tasks of Government in the Provinces now administered under Section 93 of the Constitution Act and that these Ministries will be coalitions.

If the meeting should unfortunately fail, we must carry on as at present until the parties are ready to come together. The existing Executive Council, which has done such valuable work for India, will continue if other arrangements cannot be agreed.

But I have every hope that the meeting will succeed, if the party leaders will approach the problem with the sincere intention of working with me and with each other. I can assure them that there is behind this proposal a most genuine desire on the part of all responsible leaders in the United Kingdom and of the British people as a whole to help India towards her goal. I believe that this is more than a step towards that goal, it is a considerable stride forward and a stride on the right path.

I should make it clear that these proposals affect British India only and do not make any alteration in the relations of the Princes with the Crown Representative.

With the approval of His Majesty's Government, and after consultation with my Council, orders have been given for the immediate release of the members of the Working Committee of Congress who are still in detention. I propose to leave the final decision about the others still under detention as the result of the 1942 disturbances to the new Central Government, if formed, and to the Provincial Governments.

The appropriate time for fresh elections for the Central and Provincial Legislatures will be discussed at the Conference.

Finally, I would ask you all to help in creating the atmosphere of goodwill and mutual confidence that is essential if we are to make progress. The destiny of this great country and of the many millions who live in it depends on the wisdom and good understanding of the leaders, both of action and of thought, British and Indian, at this critical moment of India's history.

India's military reputation never stood higher in the world than it does at present, thanks to the exploits of her sons drawn from all parts of the country. Her representatives at international conferences have won high regard for their statesmanlike attitude. Sympathy for India's aspirations and progress towards prosperity was never greater or more wide-spread. We have thus great assets if we can use them wisely. But it will not be easy. It will not be quick, there is very much to do, there are many pitfalls and dangers. There is on all sides something to forgive and forget.

I believe in the future of India and, as far as in me lies, will further her greatness. I ask you all for your co-operation and goodwill.

APPENDIX—XI

Desai-Liaquat Ali Formula

The following version of the Formula was released to the Press by Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, on September 1, 1945:

The Congress and the League agree that they will join in forming an Interim Government in the Centre. The composition of such a Government will be on the following lines:

(*A*) Equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League (persons nominated need not be members of the Central Legislature).

(*B*) Representatives of minorities (in particular Scheduled Castes, and the Sikhs).

(*C*) The Commander-in-Chief.

The Government will be formed and function within the framework of the existing Government of India Act. It is, however, understood that if the Cabinet cannot get a partilcular measure passed by the Legislative Assembly, they will not enforce the same by resort to any of the reserve powers of the Governor-General or the Viceroy. This will make them sufficiently independent of the Governor-General.

It is agreed between the Congress and the League that if such an Interim Government is formed, their first step would be to release the Working Committee members of the Congress.

The steps by which these efforts would be made to achieve this end are at present indicated to take the following course:

On the basis of the above understanding, some way should be found to get the Governor-General make a proposal or suggestion that he desires an Interim Government to be formed at the Centre on the agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League, and when the Governor-General invites Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Desai, either jointly or separately, the above proposals would be made desiring that they are prepared to join in forming the Government.

The next step would be to get the withdrawal of Section 93 in the Provinces and to form, as soon as possible, Provincial Governments on the lines of a Coalition.

APPENDIX—XII

Preston Grover's Interview with Jinnah

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in an interview to Preston Grover of the *Associated Press of America*, on June 30, 1945, at Simla said that Mahatma Gandhi should drop

the present Conference and work out with the Muslim League a new agreement in which Pakistan should be an accepted arrangement.

In a sense it was an invitation to resume the talks which Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah held last autumn in an effort to arrive at a mutual agreement on setting up a National Government for India.

The interview with Mr. Jinnah was in order to get a reply from him to a statement made by Mahatma Gandhi in an interview on the previous day in which the Mahatma said that if Mr. Jinnah wanted him at the Viceroy's Conference, he could make him come by simply calling for him. Mr. Jinnah began the interview in an easy manner by reading excerpts from the Gandhi interview.[1] Mahatma Gandhi had stated among other things that he had withdrawn from the Conference because he had no place in it since he was officially only an "adviser" and not a member. "Mahatma Gandhi was invited by the Viceroy as the recognized leader of one of the two main political parties, namely the Congress but he declined," Mr. Jinnah said. "Even in his interview he says the Congress is legally represented and, therefore, he can have no place in it. How can I take him to the Conference when he says he has no place in it?

"I entirely agree that, technicality apart, without Mahatma Gandhi's consent any arrangements that may be agreed upon will suffer seriously. We know that his advice means almost an order so far as the Congress is concerned. But I notice now that he has constituted himself an adviser not only to the Congress, but to the Viceroy and through him to the British people.

"The constitution of the All-India Muslim League is a democratic one and it must function according to its rules and regulations. And there is no place for an adviser."

Mr. Jinnah, then, again turned to the matter of Mahatma Gandhi's return to the Viceroy's Conference.

"As regards his statement that I could take him to the Conference and that we could go arm in arm, if Mahatma Gandhi will accept the basis of Pakistan, we need not trouble about this Conference. There will be another Conference of our own. Mahatma Gandhi, I know, is a lover of freedom and independence for the peoples of India. So am I. And I have made it clear that Pakistan cannot be established without the freedom of all the peoples living in this sub-continent. So when we are fighting for Pakistan, we are fighting for freedom of all the peoples of India. That is embodied in the resolution of the All-India Muslim League adopted at Delhi in April, 1942."

Referring, then, to the Viceroy's proposal for an Interim Government, Mr. Jinnah said: "I wonder whether Mahatma Gandhi realizes that this interim arrangement will continue until a bigger issue has been settled by agreement between us, whether it should be a divided India or a united India, whether we are to have a constitution or consti-

[1] See *Hopes About The Conference*, p. 170.

tutions. And, therefore, this preliminary issue of Pakistan must be settled first, and the sooner it is done, the better for all concerned."

APPENDIX—XIII

Congress Working Committee's Resolution on Future Constitution

The following resolution was passed by the Congress Working Committee on September 15, 1945 at Poona on the future constitution of India:

"As some misapprehensions have arisen in regard to certain resolutions of the A. I. C. C. and of the Working Committee passed in 1942 relating to the future constitution of India, the Working Committee restates the position as follows:

"In accordance with the August 1942 Resolution of the A. I. C. C., it will be for a democratically elected Constituent Assembly to prepare a constitution for the Government of India, acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the residuary powers vesting in the units. The fundamental rights as laid down by the Karachi Congress, and subsequently added to, must form an integral part of this constitution.

"Further, as declared by the A. I. C. C. at its meeting held in Allahabad in May 1942, the Congress cannot agree to any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component State or territorial unit to secede from the Indian union or federation. The Congress as the Working Committee declared in April 1942, has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless, the Committee also declared, it cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will.

"While recognizing this principle, every effort should be made to create conditions which would help different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national State."

APPENDIX—XIV

Cabinet Mission's Statement

The following is the full text of the Statement issued by the Cabinet Mission and His Excellency the Viceroy on May 16, 1946:

On March 15 last, just before the despatch of the Cabinet Delegation to India, Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, used these words:

"My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide, but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision."

* * * *

"I hope that India and her people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that they will find great advantages in doing so."

* * * *

"But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible."

Charged in these historic words we—the Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy—have done our utmost to assist the two main political parties to reach agreement upon the fundamental issue of the unity or division of India. After prolonged discussion in New Delhi we succeeded in bringing the Congress and the Muslim League together in Conference at Simla. There was a full exchange of views and both parties were prepared to make considerable concessions in order to try and reach a settlement, but it ultimately proved impossible to close the remainder of the gap between the parties and so no agreement could be concluded. Since no agreement has been reached, we feel that it is our duty to put forward what we consider are the best arrangements possible to ensure a speedy setting up of the new constitution. This statement is made with the full approval of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

Interim Government at Once

We have accordingly decided that immediate arrangements should be made whereby Indians may decide the future constitution of India and an Interim Government may be set up at once to carry on the administration of British India until such time as a new Constitution can be brought into being. We have endeavoured to be just to the smaller as well as to the larger sections of the people, and to recommend

a solution which will lead to a practicable way of governing the India of the future, and will give a sound basis for defence and a good opportunity for progress in the social, political and economic field.

It is not intended in this Statement to review the voluminous evidence that has been submitted to the Mission; but it is right that we should state that it has shown an almost universal desire, outside the supporters of the Muslim League, for the unity of India.

This consideration did not, however, deter us from examining closely and impartially the possibility of a partition of India, since we were greatly impressed by the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu majority rule.

This feeling has become so strong and widespread amongst the Muslims that it cannot be allayed by mere paper safeguards. If there is to be internal peace in India, it must be secured by measures which will assure to the Muslims a control in all matters vital to their culture, religion, and economic or other interests.

We, therefore, examined in the first instance the question of a separate and fully independent sovereign State of Pakistan as claimed by the Muslim League. Such a Pakistan would comprise two areas; one in the North-West consisting of the Provinces of the Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier, and British Baluchistan; the other in the North-East consisting of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam. The League were prepared to consider adjustment of boundaries at a later stage, but insisted that the principle of Pakistan should first be acknowledged.

The argument for a separate State of Pakistan was based, first, upon the right of the Muslim majority to decide their method of Government according to their wishes, and secondly, upon the necessity to include substantial areas in which Muslims are in a minority, in order to make Pakistan administratively and economically workable.

The size of the non-Muslim minorities in a Pakistan comprising the whole of the six Provinces enumerated above would be very considerable as the following figures[1] show—

North-Western Area—	62.07% Muslims	37.93% Non-Muslims
Punjab	16,217,242	12,201,577
North-West Frontier Province	2,788,797	249,270
Sind	3,208,325	1,326,683
British Baluchistan	438,930	62,701
	22,653,294	13,840,231

[1] All population figures in this statement are from the most recent census taken in 1941.

North-Eastern Area—

Bengal	33,005,434	27,301,091
Assam	3,442,479	6,762,254
	36,447,913	34,063,345
	51.69%	48.31%

The Muslim minorities in the remainder of British India number some 20 million dispersed amongst a total population of 188 million.

These figures show that the setting up of a separate sovereign State of Pakistan, on the lines claimed by the Muslim League, would not solve the communal minority problem, nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab and Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim. Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan, can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan. This point would particularly affect the position of the Sikhs.

Impracticability of Smaller Pakistan

We, therefore, considered whether a smaller sovereign Pakistan confined to the Muslim majority areas alone might be a possible basis of compromise. Such a Pakistan is regarded by the Muslim League as quite impracticable, because it would entail the exclusion from Pakistan of (*a*) the whole of the Ambala and Jullundur Divisions in the Punjab; (*b*) the whole of Assam except the district of Sylhet; and (*c*) a large part of Western Bengal, including Calcutta, in which city the Muslims form 23.6 per cent. of the population. We ourselves are also convinced that any solution which involves a radical partition of the Punjab and Bengal, as this would do, would be contrary to the wishes and interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these Provinces. Bengal and the Punjab each has its own common language and a long history and tradition. Moreover, any division of the Punjab would of necessity divide the Sikhs leaving substantial bodies of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary. We have, therefore, been forced to the conclusion that neither a larger nor a smaller sovereign State of Pakistan would provide an acceptable solution for the communal problem.

Defence Considerations

Apart from the great force of the foregoing arguments, there are weighty administrative, economic and military considerations. The whole of the transportation and postal and telegraph systems of India have been established on the basis of a united India. To disintegrate them would gravely injure both parts of India. The case for a united defence is even stronger. The Indian armed forces have been built up as a whole for the defence of India as a whole, and

to break them in two would inflict a deadly blow on the long traditions and high degree of efficiency of the Indian Army and would entail the gravest dangers. The Indian Navy and Indian Air Force would become much less effective. The two sections of the suggested Pakistan contain the two most vulnerable frontiers in India and for a successful defence in depth, the area of Pakisatn would be insufficient.

A further consideration of importance is the greater difficulty which the Indian States would find in associating themselves with a divided British India.

Finally, there is the geographical fact that the two halves of the proposed Pakistan State are separated by some seven hundred miles and the communications between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the goodwill of Hindustan.

We are, therefore, unable to advise the British Government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign States.

Congress Scheme Analysed

This decision does not, however, blind us to the very real Muslim apprehensions that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominating element. To meet this, the Congress have put forward a scheme under which Provinces would have full autonomy, subject only to a minimum of Central subjects, such as Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.

Under this scheme Provinces, if they wished to take part in economic and administrative planning on a large scale, could cede to the Centre optional subjects in addition to the compulsory ones mentioned above.

Such a scheme would, in our view, present considerable constitutional disadvantages and anomalies. It would be very difficult to work a Central Executive and Legislature in which some Ministers, who dealt with compulsory subjects, were responsible to the whole of India, while other Ministers, who dealt with optional subjects, would be responsible only to those Provinces which had elected to act together in respect of such subjects. This difficulty would be accentuated in the Central Legislature, where it would be necessary to exclude certain members from speaking and voting when subjects with which their Provinces were not concerned were under discussion.

Apart from the difficulty of working such a scheme, we do not consider that it would be fair to deny to other Provinces, which did not desire to take the optional subjects at the Centre, the right to form themselves into a group for a similar purpose. This would indeed be no more than the exercise of their autonomous powers in a particular way.

Position of Indian States

Before putting forward our recommendation, we turn to deal with the relationship of the Indian States to British India. It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed between the Rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government.

This fact has been fully recognized by those whom we interviewed from the States. They have at the same time assured us that the States are ready and willing to co-operate in the new development of India. The precise form which their co-operation will take must be a matter for negotiation during the building up of the new constitutional structure, and it by no means follows that it will be identical for all the States. We have not, therefore, dealt with the States in the same detail as the Provinces of British India in the paragraphs which follow.

Solution

We now indicate the nature of a solution which in our view would be just to the essential claims of all parties, and would at the same time be most likely to bring about a stable and practicable form of constitution for all India.

We recommend that the constitution should take the following basic form—

(1) There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which should deal with the following subjects Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications; and should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

(2) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and States representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

(3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.

(4) The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.

(5) Provinces should be free to form Groups with Executives and Legislatures, and each Group could determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common.

(6) The constitutions of the Union and of the Groups should contain a provision whereby any Province could, by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the

terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter.

It is not our object to lay out the details of a constitution on the above lines, but to set in motion the machinery whereby a constitution can be settled by Indians for Indians.

It has been necessary, however, for us to make this recommendation as to the broad basis of the future constitution because it became clear to us in the course of our negotiations that not until that had been done was there any hope of getting the two major communities to join in the setting up of the constitution-making machinery.

Constitution-Making Machinery

We now indicate the constitution-making machinery which we propose should be brought into being forthwith in order to enable a new constitution to be worked out.

In forming any Assembly to decide a new Constitutional structure, the first problem is to obtain as broad-based and accurate a representation of the whole population as is possible. The most satisfactory method obviously would be by election based on adult franchise; but any attempt to introduce such a step would lead to a wholly unacceptable delay in the formulation of the new Constitution. The only practicable alternative is to utilize the recently elected Provincial Legislative Assemblies as the electing bodies.

There are, however, two factors in their composition which make this difficult. First, the numerical strengths of the Provincial Legislative Assemblies do not bear the same proportion to the total population in each Province. Thus, Assam with a population of 10 millions has a Legislative Assembly of 108 members, while Bengal, with a population six times as large, has an Assembly of only 250. Secondly, owing to the weightage given to minorities by the Communal Award, the strengths of the several communities in each Provincial Legislative Assembly are not in proportion to their numbers in the Province. Thus, the number of seats reserved for Muslims in the Bengal Legislative Assembly is only 48% of the total, although they form 55% of the Provincial population. After a most careful consideration of the various methods by which these inequalities might be corrected, we have come to the conclusion that the fairest and most practicable plan would be—

(*a*) to allot to each Province a total number of seats proportional to its population, roughly in the ratio of one to a million, as the nearest substitute for representation by adult suffrage.

(*b*) to divide this provincial allocation of seats between the main communities in each Province in proportion to their population.

(*c*) to provide that the representatives allotted to each community in a Province shall be elected by the members of that community in its Legislative Assembly.

We think that for these purposes it is sufficient to recognize only three main communities in India; General, Muslim and Sikh, the "General" community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs. As the smaller minorities would, upon the population basis, have little or no representation since they would lose the weightage which assures them seats in the Provincial Legislatures, we have made the arrangements set out elsewhere below to give them a full representation upon all matters of special interest to the minorities.

(*i*) We, therefore, propose that there shall be elected by each Provincial Legislative Assembly the following numbers of representatives, each part of the Legislature (General, Muslim or Sikh) electing its own representatives by the method of proportional representation with the single transferable vote:

Table of Representation

SECTION A

Province	*General*	*Muslim*	*Total*
Madras	45	4	49
Bombay	19	2	21
United Provinces	47	8	55
Bihar	31	5	36
Central Provinces	16	1	17
Orissa	9	0	9
TOTAL	167	20	187

SECTION B

Province	*General*	*Muslim*	*Sikh*	*Total*
Punjab	8	16	4	28
N. W. F. P.	0	3	0	3
Sind	1	3	0	4
TOTAL	9	22	4	35

SECTION C

Province	*General*	*Muslim*	*Total*
Bengal	27	33	60
Assam	7	3	10
TOTAL	34	36	70

Total for British India	292
Maximum for Indian States	93
TOTAL	385

Note—In order to represent the Chief Commissioners Provinces there will be added to Section A the Member representing Delhi in the Central Legislative Assembly, the Member representing Ajmer-Merwara in the Central Legislative Assembly, and a representative to be elected by the Coorg Legislative Council. To Section B will be added a representative of British Baluchistan.

(*ii*) It is the intention that the States should be given in the final Constituent Assembly appropriate representation which would not, on the basis of the calculations adopted for British India, exceed 93, but the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation. The States would in the preliminary stage be represented by a Negotiating Committee.

(*iii*) The representatives thus chosen shall meet at New Delhi as soon as possible.

(*iv*) A preliminary meeting will be held at which the general order of business will be decided, a Chairman and other officers elected, and an Advisory Committee on the rights of citizens, minorities, and tribal and excluded areas set up. Thereafter, the provincial representatives will divide up into the three Sections shown under A, B, and C, in the Table of Representation in sub-paragraph (*i*) of this paragraph.

(*v*) These Sections shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces included in each Section, and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces and, if so, with what provincial subjects the Group should deal. Provinces shall have the power to opt out of the Groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (*viii*) below.

(*vi*) The representatives of the Sections and the Indian States shall reassemble for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution.

(*vii*) In the Union Constituent Assembly resolutions varying the provisions given elsewhere above or raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities.

The Chairman of the Assembly shall decide which (if any) of the resolutions raise major communal issues and shall, if so requested by a majority of the representatives of either of the major communities, consult the Federal Court before giving his decision.

(*viii*) As soon as the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation, it shall be open to any Province to elect to come out of any Group in which it has been placed. Such a decision shall be taken by the new legislature of the Province after the first general election under the new constitution.

Advisory Committee on Citizens' Rights

The Advisory Committee on the rights of citizens, minorities, and tribal and excluded areas should contain full representation of the

interests affected, and their function will be to report to the Union Constituent Assembly upon the list of Fundamental Rights, the clauses for the protection of minorities, and a scheme for the administration of the tribal and excluded areas, and to advise whether these rights should be incorporated in the Provincial, Group or Union Constitution.

Negotiating Committee for States

His Excellency the Viceroy will forthwith request the Provincial Legislatures to proceed with the election of their representatives and the States to set up a Negotiating Committee. It is hoped that the process of constitution-making can proceed as rapidly as the complexities of the task permit so that the interim period may be as short as possible.

It will be necessary to negotiate a Treaty between the Union Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom to provide for certain matters arising out of the transfer of power.

While the constitution-making proceeds, the administration of India has to be carried on. We attach the greatest importance, therefore, to the setting up at once of an Interim Government having the support of the major political parties. It is essential during the interim period that there should be the maximum of co-operation in carrying through the difficult tasks that face theGovernment of India. Besides the heavy task of day-to-day administration, there is the grave danger of famine to be countered; there are decisions to be taken in many matters of post-war development which will have a far-reaching effect on India's future; and there are important international conferences in which India has to be represented.

For all these purposes a Government having popular support is necessary. The Viceroy has already started discussion to this end, and hopes soon to form an Interim Government in which all the portfolios, including that of War Member, will be held by Indian leaders having the full confidence of the people. The British Government recognizing the significance of the changes in the Government of India, will give the fullest measure of co-operation to the Government so formed in the accomplishment of its tasks of administration and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible.

To the leaders and people of India, who now have the opportunity of complete independence, we would finally say this: We and our Government and countrymen hope that it would be possible for the Indian people themselves to agree upon the method of framing the new constitution under which they will live. Despite the labours which we have shared with the Indian Parties, and the exercise of much patience and goodwill by all, this has not been possible. We, therefore, now lay before you proposals which, after llstening to all sides and after much earnest thought, we trust will enable you to attain your independence in the shortest time and with the least danger of internal disturbance and conflict. These proposals may not, of

course, completely satisfy all parties, but you will recognize with us that at this supreme moment in Indian history statesmanship demands mutual accommodation.

Alternative to Chaos

We ask you to consider the alternative to acceptance of these proposals. After all the efforts which we and the Indian Parties have made together for agreement, we must state that in our view there is small hope of peaceful settlement by agreement of the Indian Parties alone. The alternative would, therefore, be a grave danger of violence, chaos, and even civil war. The result and duration of such a disturbance cannot be foreseen; but it is certain that it would be a terrible disaster for many millions of men, women and children. This is a possibility which must be regarded with equal abhorrence by the Indian people, our own countrymen, and the world as a whole.

We, therefore, lay these proposals before you in the profound hope that they will be accepted and operated by you in the spirit of accommodation and goodwill in which they are offered. We appeal to all who have the future good of India at heart to extend their vision beyond their own community or interest to the interests of the whole four hundred millions of the Indian people.

We hope that the new independent India may choose to be a member of the British Commonwealth. We hope, in any event, that you will remain in close and friendly association with our people. But these are matters for your own free choice. Whatever that choice may be, we look forward with you to your ever-increasing prosperity among the great nations of the world, and to a future even more glorious than your past.

APPENDIX—XV

Congress Working Committee's Resolution on Mission's Statement

The following resolution was passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on May 24, 1946, at New Delhi, on the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946:

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the Statement dated May 16, 1946, issued by the Delegation of the British Cabinet and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, as well as the correspondence relating to it that has passed between the Congress President and the members of the Delegation. They have examined it with every desire to find a way for a peaceful and co-operative transfer of power and the establishment of a free and independent India. Such an India must necessarily have a strong central authority capable of representing the nation wth power and dignity in the counsels of the world. In considering the Statement,

the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a Provisional Government and the clarification given by members of the Delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India; a strong, though limited, Central authority; full autonomy for the Provinces; the establishment of a democratic structure in the Centre and in the units; the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth; and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the Provisional Government will function, in spite of the assurance given in Paragraph 23 of the Statement. If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the Provisional Government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence, and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be removed. The continued presence of a foreign army of occupation is a negation of independence.

The Statement issued by the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy contains certain recommendations and suggests a procedure for the building up of the Constituent Assembly, which is sovereign in so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned. The Committee do not agree with some of these recommendations. In their view it will be open to the Constituent Assembly itself at any stage to make changes and variations, with the proviso that in regard to certain major communal matters the majority decision of both the major communities will be necessary.

The procedure for the election of the Constituent Assembly is based on representation in the ratio of one to a million, but the application of this principle appears to have been overlooked in the case of European members of Assemblies, particularly in Assam and Bengal. Therefore, the Committee expect that this oversight will be corrected.

The Constituent Assembly is meant to be a fully elected body, chosen by the elected members of the Provincial Legislatures. In Baluchistan, there is no elected Assembly or any other kind of chamber which might elect a representative for the Constituent Assembly. It would be improper for any kind of nominated individual to speak for the whole province of Baluchistan, which he really does not represent in any way.

In Coorg, the Legislative Council contains some nominated members as well as Europeans elected from a special constituency of

less than a hundred electors. Only the elected members from the general constituencies should participate in the election.

The Statement of the Cabinet Delegation affirms the basic principle of Provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the Provinces. It is further said that Provinces should be free to form groups. Subsequently, however, it is recommended that Provincial representatives will divide up into sections which 'shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for the Provinces.' There is a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of Provincial autonomy. In order to retain the recommendatory character of the Statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read Paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective Provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus, the Constituent Assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it.

The provisions in the Statement in regard to the Indian States are vague and much has been left for future decision. The Working Committee would, however, like to make it clear that the Constituent Assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements, and the manner of appointing State representatives for the Constituent Assembly must approximate, in so far as is possible, to the method adopted in the Provinces. The Committee are gravely concerned to learn that even at this present moment some State governments are attempting to crush the spirit of their people with the help of armed forces. These recent developments in the States are of great significance in the present and for the future of India, as they indicate that there is no real change of policy on the part of some of the State governments and of those who exercise paramountcy.

A Provisional National Government must have a new basis and must be a precursor of the full independence that will emerge from the Constituent Assembly. It must function in recognition of that fact, though changes in law need not be made at this stage. The Governor-General may continue as the head of that Government during the interim period, but the Government should function as a Cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature. The status, powers and composition of the Provisional Government should be fully defined in order to enable the Committee to come to a decision. Major communal issues shall be decided in the manner referred to above in order to remove any possible fear or suspicion from the minds of a minority.

The Working Committee consider that the connected problems involved in the establishment of a Provisional Government and a Constituent Assembly should be viewed together so that they may appear as parts of the same picture, and there may be co-ordination

between the two, as well as an acceptance of the independence that is now recognized as India's right and due. It is only with the conviction that they are engaged in building up a free, great and independent India, that the Working Committee can approach this task and invite the co-operation of all the people of India. In the absence of a full picture, the Committee are unable to give a final opinion at this stage.

APPENDIX—XVI

British Government's Interpretation of Mission's Statement

The British Government, after a Round Table Conference with the Indian leaders, issued the following Statement on December 6, 1946, in which they reaffirmed the interpretation of the Cabinet Mission in their May 16, 1946, Statement regarding the grouping of Provinces into Sections:

"The conversations held by His Majesty's Government with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh came to an end this evening as Pandit Nehru and Sardar Baldev Singh are returning to India to-morrow morning.

"The object of the conversations has been to obtain the participation and co-operation of all parties in the Constituent Assembly. It is not expected that any final settlement could be arrived at, since the Indian representatives must consult their colleagues before any final decision is reached.

"The main difficulty that has arisen has been over the interpretation of Paragraph 19 (5) and (8) of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, relating to meetings in Sections, which runs asfollows:—

> 19 (5). "These Sections shall proceed to settle Provincial constitutions for the Provinces included in each Section and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces and if so with what Provincial subjects the Group should deal. Provinces should have power to opt out of the Groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (8) below."
>
> Paragraph 19 (8) :—
>
> "As soon as the new constitutional agreements have come into operation, it shall be open to any Province to elect to come out of any Group in which it has been placed. Such a decision shall be taken by the Legislature of the Province after the first general election under the new Constituent Assembly."

"The Cabinet Mission have throughout maintained the view that the decisions of the Sections should, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, be taken by a simple majority vote of the representatives in the Sections. This view has been accepted by the

Muslim League, but the Congress have put forward a different view. They have asserted that the true meaning of the Statement, read as a whole, is that the Provinces have the right to decide both as to Grouping and as to their own Constitutions.

"His Majesty's Government have had legal advice which confirms that the Statement of May 16 means what the Cabinet Mission have always stated was their intention. This part of the Statement, as so interpreted, must therefore be considered an essential part of the Scheme of May 16 for enabling the Indian people to formulate a constitution which His Majesty's Government would be prepared to submit to Parliament. It should, therefore, be accepted by all parties in the Constituent Assembly.

"It is, however, clear that other questions of interpretation of the Statement of May 16 may arise and His Majesty's Government hope that if the Council of the Muslim League are able to agree to participate in the Constituent Assembly, they will also agree, as have the Congress, that the Federal Court should be asked to decide matters of interpretation that may be referred to them by either side and will accept such a decision, so that the procedure, both in the Union Constituent Assembly and in the Sections, may accord with the Cabinet Mission's Plan.

"On the matter immediately in dispute, His Majesty's Government urge the Congress to accept the view of the Cabinet Mission in order that a way may be opened for the Muslim League to reconsider their attitude. If in spite of this reaffirmation of the intention of the Cabinet Mission, the Constituent Assembly desires that this fundamental point should be referred to for a decision of the Federal Court, such a reference should be made at a very early date. It will then be reasonable that the meetings of the Sections of the Constituent Assembly should be postponed until the decision of the Federal Court is known.

"There has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except upon the basis of the agreed procedure should the constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented. His Majesty's Government could not, of course, contemplate, as Congress have stated they would not contemplate, forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country."

APPENDIX—XVII

The Working Committee's Statement

The Working Committee at its meeting in Delhi on December 22, 1946 considered the British Government's Statement of December 6, 1946 and issued the following statement:

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the Statement issued by the British Government on December 6, 1946,

as well as other statements made recently on their behalf in Parliament. These statements, though made by way of interpretation and elucidation, are clearly additions to, and variations of, the British Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946, on which the whole scheme of the Constituent Assembly was based.

The Statement of May 16, 1946, laid down in Paragraph 15 as basic principles of the Constitution that "there should be a Union of India embracing both British India and the States", that "all subjects other than Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces" and that "Provinces should be free to form Groups."

The Provinces were thus intended to be autonomous, subject to the Union controlling certain specified subjects. Paragraph 19 laid down, *inter alia*, the procedure for Sections to meet, for decisions to be taken as to whether Groups should be formed or not and for any Province to elect to come out of the Group in which it might have been placed.

In their resolution of May 24, 1946, the Working Committee pointed out what appeared to be a divergence between the basic principles and the procedure suggested, in that a measure of compulsion was introduced which infringed the basic principles of Provincial autonomy. The Cabinet Mission thereupon issued a Statement of May 25, 1946, in which it was stated that "the interpretation, put by the Congress resolution on Paragraph 15 of the Statement, to the effect that the Provinces can, in the first instance, make the choice whether or not to belong to the Section in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation's intentions. The reasons for the Grouping of Provinces are well known and this is an essential feature of the Scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the two parties." The point of issue was not merely one of procedure but the fundamental principle of Provincial autonomy and whether or not a Province or part should be coerced against its will.

The Congress made it clear later that their objection was not to Provinces entering Sections but to compulsory Grouping and the possibility of a dominating Province framing a constitution for another Province entirely against the wishes of the latter. This might result in the framing of rules, the regulation of franchise, electorates, constituencies for elections and the composition of the Legislature, which might seriously prejudice or even nullify the provision for a Province subsequently to opt out of a Group. It was pointed out that this could never be the intention of the Cabinet Mission as it would be repugnant to the basic principles and policy of the Scheme they had propounded. The Congress approach to the problem of constitution-making has all along been that coercion should not be exercised against any Province or part of the country and that the constitution of free India should be drawn up with the co-operation and goodwill of all parties and Provinces concerned.

In a letter dated 15th June, 1946, from Lord Wavell to Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress, it was stated that "the Delega-

tion and I are aware of your objections to the principle of Grouping. I would, however, point out that the Statement of May 16 does not make Grouping compulsory. It leaves the decision to the elected representatives of the Provinces concerned, sitting together in Sections. The only provision which is made is that the representatives of certain Provinces should meet in Sections so that they can decide whether or not they wish to form Groups." Thus the principle which was emphasized again was that Grouping was not compulsory and in regard to Sections a certain procedure was indicated. This procedure was not clear and could be interpreted in more than one way and, in any event, a point of procedure could not override a basic principle. We pointed out that the right interpretation should be one which did no violence to that principle. Further, in order to smooth the way to the co-operation of all concerned in the working of the proposed Scheme, we not only made it clear that we were prepared to go into the Sections, but also we suggested that if our interpretation was not accepted we would be agreeable to reference on this point to the Federal Court. It is well known that the proposal in regard to Grouping affected injuriously two Provinces especially, namely, Assam and the North West Frontier Province as well as the Sikhs in the Punjab. Their representatives expressed their strong disapproval of this proposal. In a letter to the Secretary of State dated 25th May, 1946, Master Tara Singh gave expression to the anxiety and apprehensions of the Sikhs and asked for clarification in regard to certain matters. The Secretary of State sent an answer to this letter on June 1, 1946, in the course of which he said: "I have considered carefully the detailed points you raise at the end of your letter. I fear the Mission cannot issue any additions to, or interpretation of the Statement."

In spite of this explicit statement, the British Government have, on December 6, issued a Statement which is both an addition to, and an interpretation of the Statement of May 16, 1946. They have done so after more than six and a half months, during which period many developments have taken place as a consequence of the original Statement. Throughout this period the position of the Congress was made repeatedly clear to the British Government or their representatives, and it was with full knowledge of this position that the British Government took subsequent steps in furtherance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals. That position was in conformity with the basic principles laid down in the Statement of May 16, 1946, which Statement the Congress had accepted in its entirety. Further the Congress had expressed its willingness to refer, if necessity arose, the point of interpretation to the Federal Court, whose decision should be accepted by the parties concerned. In the course of his letter dated June 28, 1946, addressed to Mr. Jinnah, the Viceroy stated that 'Congress had accepted the Statement of May 16.' In the course of a broadcast on August 24, 1946, the Viceroy, in appealing to the Muslim League to co-operate, pointed out that the Congress are ready

to agree that any dispute of interpretation may be referred to the Federal Court.

The Muslim League reversed its former decision and rejected the British Cabinet Mission's Scheme by a formal resolution, and even decided to resort to direct action. Their spokesmen have since repeatedly challenged the very basis of that Scheme, that is, the Constitution of a Union of India, and have reverted to their demand for a partition of India. Even after the British Government's Statement of December 6, 1946, the leaders of the Muslim League have reiterated this demand for partition and the establishment of two separate independent Governments in India.

When the invitation of the British Government was received by the Congress at the end of November last to send its representatives to London, the Congress position was clearly indicated again. It was on an assurance of the Prime Minister of Great Britain that a representative of the Congress proceeded to London.

In spite of this assurance and of previous assurances to the effect that no additions to, or interpretations of, the Statement of May 16, 1946, were going to be made, the British Government have now issued a Statement which clearly, in several respects, goes beyond the original Statement, on the basis of which progress has been made till now.

The Working Committee deeply regret that the British Government should have acted in a manner which has not been in keeping with their own assurances, and which has created suspicion in the minds of large numbers of people in India. For some time past, the attitude of the British Government and their representatives in India has been such as to add to the difficulties and complexities of the situation in the country. Their present intervention, long after the members of the Constituent Assembly had been elected, has created a new situation which is full of peril for the future. Because of this, the Working Committee have given anxious and prolonged thought to it.

The Congress seeks to frame, through the Constituent Assembly, a constitution of a free and independent India with the willing co-operation of all elements of the Indian people. The Working Committee regret that Muslim League members of the Constituent Assembly have refrained from attending its opening session. The Committee, however, appreciate and express their gratification at the presence in the Constituent Assembly of representatives of all other interests and sections of the people of India, and note with pleasure the spirit of co-operation in a common task and a high endeavour which has been in evidence during the sessions of the Assembly. The Committee will continue their efforts to make the Constituent Assembly fully representative of all the people of India and trust that members of the Muslim League will give their co-operation in this great task. In order to achieve this, the Committee have advised Congress representatives in the Assembly to postpone consideration of important issues to a subsequent meeting.

In their Statement of December 6, 1946, the British Government in giving their interpretation of a doubtful point of procedure, have referred to it as a "fundamental point", and suggested that the Constituent Assembly may refer it to the Federal Court at a very early date. Subsequent statements made on behalf of the British Government have made it clear that they are not prepared to accept the decision of this Court should it go against their own interpretation. On behalf of the Muslim League also it has been stated that they will not be bound by the decision of the Federal Court, and a demand for the partition of India, which is a negation of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme, continues to be put forward. While the Congress has always been willing to agree to a reference to the Federal Court, any reference now, when none of the other parties are prepared to join in it or to accept it, and one of them does not even accept the basis of the Scheme, becomes totally uncalled for and unbecoming, and unsuited to the dignity of either the Congress or the Federal Court. By their repeated statements, British statesmen have ruled this out.

The Working Committee are still of the opinion that the interpretation put by the British Government in regard to the method of voting in the Sections is not in conformity with Provincial autonomy, which is one of the fundamental bases of the Scheme proposed in the Statement of May 16. The Committee are anxious to avoid anything that may come in the way of the successful working of the Constituent Assembly, and are prepared to do everything in their power to seek and obtain the largest measure of co-operation, provided that no fundamental principle is violated. In view of the importance and urgency of the issues facing the country and the far-reaching consequences which must follow any decisions, the Working Committee are convening an emergent meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Delhi early in January to consider the latest developments and to give such directions as it may deem fit.

APPENDIX—XVIII

A.-I.C.C.'s Resolution on Br. Govt.'s Statement of Dec. 6, 1946

The following is the text of the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. at its meeting at New Delhi on Jan. 6, 1947:

The A.I.C.C. having considered the events that have taken place in the country since the Meerut session of the Congress in November last, the Statement issued by the British Government on December 6, 1946, and the Statement of the Working Committee of December 22, 1946, advises Congressmen as follows:—

1. The A.I.C.C. endorses the Statement of the Working Committee of December 22, 1946, and expresses its agreement with the views contained therein.

2. While the Congress has always been agreeable to making

a reference to the Federal Court on the question of interpretation in dispute, such a reference has become purposeless and undesirable owing to recent announcements made on behalf of the British Government. A reference could only be made on an agreed basis, the parties concerned agreeing to abide by the decision given.

3. The A.I.C.C. is firmly of opinion that the constitution for a free and independent India should be framed by the people of India on the basis of as wide an agreement as possible. There must be no interference whatsoever by any external authority, and no compulsion of any Province or part of a Province by another Province. The A.I.C.C. realizes and appreciates the difficulties placed in the way of some Provinces, notably Assam and the N.W.F.P. and the Sikhs in the Punjab, by the British Cabinet's Scheme of May 16, 1946, and more especially by the interpretation put upon it by the British Government in their Statement of December 6, 1946. The Congress cannot be a party to any such compulsion or imposition against the will of the people concerned, a principle which the British Government have themselves recognized.

4. The A.I.C.C. is anxious that the Constituent Assembly should proceed with the work of framing a constitution for free India with the goodwill of all parties concerned and, with a view to removing the difficulties that have arisen owing to varying interpretations, agree to advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the Sections. It must be clearly understood, however, that this must not involve any compulsion of a Province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised. In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a Province or part of a Province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned. The future course of action will depend upon the developments that take place and the A.I.C.C., therefore, directs the Working Committee to advise upon it, whenever circumstances so require, keeping in view the basic principle of Provincial autonomy.

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